

A GENERAL
HISTORY of the WORLD,
FROM THE
CREATION to the present Time.

INCLUDING

All the EMPIRES, KINGDOMS, and STATES; their REVO-
LUTIONS, FORMS OF GOVERNMENT, LAWS, RELIGIONS,
CUSTOMS and MANNERS; the PROGRESS of their LEARN-
ING, ARTS, SCIENCES, COMMERCE and TRADE;

Together with

Their CHRONOLOGY, ANTIQUITIES, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, and
CURIOSITIES of NATURE and ART.

By WILLIAM GUTHRIE, Esq;
JOHN GRAY, Esq;

And others eminent in this Branch of Literature.

*cui lecta potenter erit res
Nec facundia deferet hunc, nec lucidus ordo.*

HOR.

VOLUME VI.

L O N D O N:

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A
GENERAL HISTORY
OF THE
WORLD.

BOOK XX.

THE ARABIAN HISTORY.

CHAP. I.

A Description of Arabia, and an Account of the
ARABIANS till the time of MAHOMET.

ARABIA, from remote antiquity, has been called *Arabia*, by the natives *Arabah*, which name it still retains. whence so Their historians also frequently stile their country named. *Gjazirah*, or *Jezirat al Arab*, the peninsula of the *Arabs*; *Belad al Arab*, the region of the *Arabs*; *Diyar al Arab*, the provinces of the *Arabs*; and, by many of the Orientals, *Arabistan*. It is sometimes called *Cush* in Scripture, and *Cushatha* by some of the Syriac writers.

Arabia, in its greatest extent, is about one thousand, one hundred miles long, and upwards of one thousand, three hundred broad. It is bounded, on the east, by the *Persian Gulf*, and a ridge of mountains, which separate it from *Babylonia*; on the south, by the *Straits of Bab al Mandab*, and the *Indian Ocean*; on the west, by *Palestine*, part of *Syria*, the *Isthmus of Suez*, and the *Red-sea*, called by the *Arabs* the *Sea ab Kolzom*; and, on the north, by *Palestine*, *Cœlesyria*, and the *Euphrates*. The limits of *Proper-Arabia*, however, extend no farther northward than the northern extremities of the *Red-sea* and *Persian Gulf*. This tract of land, which

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the *Greeks* nearly comprehended under the name of *Arabia the Happy*, has been peopled by the *Arabs* almost ever since the dispersion. *Arabia Petræa* is, by the eastern geographers, assigned partly to *Egypt*, and partly to *Syria*; and *Arabia Deserta*, they call the *Deserts of Syria*: but, as the *Arabs* have been in possession of these two provinces for many ages: the *Turks* and *Persians*, at this day, include them in *Arabistan*.

As the *Arabians* made incursions and settlements beyond the territories here mentioned, the antients therefore differed in assigning the limits of *Arabia*. *Pliny*, in his description of *Arabia*, includes a great part of *Mesopotamia*, on account of the *Arabian* colonies planted as far north as the mountains *Niphates* and *Amanus*, by *Tigranes*. Part of the western coast of the *Red-sea*, and the east side of *Egypt*, was also sometimes reckoned as part of *Arabia**.

The first
division of
Arabia.

The first division of the peninsula of *Arabia* was into *Kedem* and *Arabah*. *Kedem*, or the eastern land, comprehended *Arabia Felix* and *Arabia Deserta*: and *Arabah*; that is, the western country, answered to *Arabia Petræa*, which was also called *Arabia Citerior*, and *Arabia Vetus*. The first inhabitants of *Arabah* were the *Caslubim*, descended from *Misraim*, the *Caph-torim*; and the *Horites*, who occupied Mount *Seir* before they were expelled from thence by *Esau* and his posterity. *Ish-mael*, and his descendants also settled here; and, last of all, the *Edomites*, or *Idumeans*. *Kedem*, or the Eastern *Arabia*, was first peopled by the sons of *Joktan*, who are reputed the genuine *Arabians*; but, in process of time, the *Ishmaelites* spread themselves over this country. We have already observed that part of it was also possessed in early times by some of the *Cushites*. It appears from Scripture, that the children of *Abraham*, by his concubine *Heturah*, likewise contributed towards replenishing it with inhabitants.

Arabia
divided
by *Ptolemy*
into three
parts.

Ptolemy seems to have been the first who divided *Arabia* into the three divisions of *Petræa*, *Deserta*, and *Felix*; which division has generally prevailed since his time. *Arabia Petræa* had *Syria* and *Arabia Deserta* on the east; on the south, *Arabia Felix*, from which it was separated by a ridge of mountains; on the west, the *Herosopolitan* Gulph of the *Red-sea*, and the isthmus of *Suez*; and, on the north, it was bounded by *Palestine* and *Cæle-Syria*. This tract, the greatest part of which was rocky and barren, received its name from *Petra*, its metropolis, the chief fortress of the *Idumeans*, *Edomites*, or *Nabathæans*. Authors differ with regard to the situation of *Petra*, some thinking it to have been the same with *Carak*, on the confines of *Arabia* and *Syria*: others supposing it the same with *Hager*, or *Hejr*, the capital of a district in the kingdom of *Hejaz*; and, lastly, others believing that *Errakim*, or *Arrakeh*,

* Ptol. in Arab. Diop. Sic. l. 3. Bochart. Phal. & Chan. Plin. l. 6. Pocock Golii notæ ad Alfragan.

a place near *Karak*, to correspond with the *Petra* of the ancients; *St. Athanasius*, *Father Calmet*, and others, affirm that there were more than one *Petra*. *Ptolemy* gives the names of several other places in this tract, but probably they were always obscure and insignificant, as scarce any footsteps of them are to be found. In *Arabia Deserta*, the Scripture mentions the three cities, *Dura*, *Paran*, and *Pithon*; the first of which stood upon Mount *Seir*, and the two last are supposed to correspond with the *Phara* of *Ptolemy*, and *Heroopolis*, on the western extremity of the *Red-sea* *.

The most considerable nations inhabiting *Arabia Petræa*, in the earlier ages, were the *Ishmaelites*, the *Nabatheans*, the *Cedaræi*, or *Kedaræni*, and the *Agareni*. It is probable that the descendants of *Midian*, one of *Abraham's* sons by *Keturah*, seated themselves in the neighbourhood of the *Ishmaelites*, since we find the same people called in Scripture *Ishmaelites* and *Midianites*. All these nations, in after ages, went by the name of *Saratens*. The chief mountains in this country were *Sinai* and *Casius*.

Arabia Deserta was separated from *Babylonia* on the east, and *Arabia Felix* on the south, by two ridges of mountains. It was bounded, on the north, by the *Euphrates*; and, on the west, by *Syria*, *Judæa*, and *Arabia Petræa*. *Ptolemy* mentions the following tribes who inhabited this country. The *Cauchabeni*, bordering on the *Euphrates*, the *Batanei*, on the confines of *Syria*; the *Agubeni*, and *Rhaabeni*, towards the frontiers of *Arabia Felix*; and the *Orcheni*, near the *Persian Gulph*. There were also the *Masani*, the *Marteni*, the *Æsitæ*, and the *Agnæi*; all which were very obscure, except the two last. *Bechart* supposes the *Æsitæ* to have inhabited that tract where the holy and patient *Job* was seated. He believes that *Ptolemy* wrote *Ausitæ*, which is the name of the land of *Uz* in the septuagint version. *Ptolemy* has given us a large list of towns in this country; but of these no certain account can now be given, and probably they were never very considerable, as it was customary for the *Arabs* to dwell in tents; and by far the greatest part of the country was nothing but a lonesome desolate wilderness, consisting of wide sandy plains and naked rocks and precipices. The plains were here and there interspersed with fruitful spots, which appeared like so many islands, and served for pasture to the herds and flocks of the inhabitants.

Arabia Felix was bounded, on the north, by the two provinces just described; and was enclosed, on every other side,

* Gagnier in not. ad *Abulfed. Prol.* in *Arab.* *Pliny*, l. 6. *Shaw's Geogr.* *Sculten's ind.* *Geogr. Cellar.* *Geogr. Ant.* *Cluver.*

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by the sea. The eastern writers divide this country into five provinces ; and *Strabo* tells us, that, in his time, it was divided into five kingdoms. The names of the provinces are *Yaman*, *Hejaz*, *Tebama*, *Najd*, and *Yamama* ; which three last are included, by some, under the kingdom of *Hejaz*. The antients make mention of many nations in this country ; the principal of which were, the *Sabæi*, *Gerræi*, *Minnæi*, *Atramitæ*, *Maranitæ*, *Catabani*, *Asitæ*, *Homeritæ*, *Saphoritæ*, *Omanitæ*, *Saraceni*, *Nabathæi*, *Thamydeni*, and *Brizomenæ*. The *Sabæi* seem to have possessed a very considerable territory in the southern part of this peninsula, and their country was anciently celebrated for the vast quantity of frankincense which it produced. *Saba*, or *Sabæ*, its metropolis, was a large, opulent, and strong city, and was seated on a hill near the *Red-sea*. This territory contained several other maritime and inland cities.

The *Gerræi* and *Minnæi*, according to *Strabo*, brought vast quantities of frankincense and other perfumes from the southern parts of *Arabia Felix* to the sea-ports, which is a strong presumption of their being two tribes, or cantons, of the *Sabæi*, especially as *Pliny* places their capital city, which he calls *Carmus*, in the country of the *Sabæi*.

The *Atramitæ*, in all probability, inhabited part at least of the province at this day named *Hadramaut*, the principal towns of which are *Shibam* and *Tezim*, both of them about a day's journey from the *Indian ocean*.

According to *Pliny*, the *Catabani* were a considerable people. The *Larendani*, *Catabani*, and *Gebanitæ*, he says, had many towns, two of which particularly, named *Nagia* and *Tamna*, contained sixty-five temples.

The *Asitæ* possessed all that tract about the promontory *Syagrus*, the cape *Ras al Ghat* of the moderns, including part of the provinces of *Oman* and *Mahra*.

The *Homerites*, according to *Ptolemy*, were seated in the southern parts of *Arabia Felix*, and were bounded on the east by the *Adramitæ*. It is most probable, that they were a canton of the *Sabæi* ; for, according to the oriental writers, the *Sabæi* were called *Hamyarites*, from *Hamyar*, the son of their great ancestor *Saba*. The *Sapphoritæ*, or inhabitants of *Sapphar*, a city of note in the dominions of the *Homerites*, may be looked upon as the same people with the foregoing. The *Omanitæ* may likewise be looked upon as a tribe of the *Homerites*, as their capital city *Omanum* was probably the same with the modern *Oman*. The province of *Oman*, which anciently seems also to have had the name of *Sohar*, stretches itself out three hundred miles on the coast of the *Persian sea*.

The *Saracens*, or *Nabathæans*, possessed that part of *Arabia Felix* bordering upon *Arabia Petrea* and *Arabia Deserta* ; but what was the extent of their territory is uncertain. Con-
 signous to them the antients placed the *Thamydeni*, who, according to *Diodorus Siculus*, inhabited a part of the coast of
 the

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the *Arabian* gulf. Near the *Thamydeni* were seated the *Brizomenæ*, who lived upon wild beasts taken in hunting. In their country stood a temple held in the highest veneration amongst all the *Arabs*, being probably sacred to *Isis*, under whose protection was an island on the *Brizomean* coast, as *Diodorus* relates. The many other tribes, whose names are given us by the antients, may be considered as branches of the *Saracens*, *Nabathæans*, *Sabæans*, or *Homerites*.

Nysa was a town of *Arabia* on the *Red Sea*, famous for the education of *Bacchus*, who from thence and his father *Jupiter* received the name of *Dionysius*. *Arga* and *Badeo*, two maritime cities in a southern direction from *Nysa*, had royal palaces, in which the sovereigns of the country sometimes resided. *Musa*, or *Muza*, was a celebrated empory and harbour, to which the *Arab* merchants resorted with their frankincense, spices, and perfumes. Some authors take the modern *Mocha* to correspond with the antient *Musa*; but others suppose *Mosa*, at present a small town about ten leagues from *Mocha*, to be that antient mart, as it still is the rendezvous and thoroughfare of the fruits which come from the mountainous parts of *Arabia*.

The oriental writers, as we have observed, divide *Arabia* into five provinces, namely, *Yaman*, *Hejaz*, *Tehama*, *Najd*, and *Yamama*. The province of *Yaman* extends itself along the *Indian* ocean from the *Streights* of *Bab al Mandab* to *Cape Ras al Ghat*. It is divided into several lesser provinces, as *Hadramaut Shibr*, *Oman*, *Mahra*, &c. of which *Shibr* alone produces the frankincense. The principal cities in it known to the ancients, are the following, *Mocha*, a port on the *Red Sea* of considerable trade, surrounded with walls, and containing ten thousand inhabitants. *Aden*, a celebrated mart on the *Indian* ocean, not far from the *Streights* of *Bab al Mandab*. It is supposed by *Golius* to be the *Arabiae Emporium* of *Ptolemy*. *Sanaa*, the capital of *Yaman*, a very antient city, is seated in a mountainous territory, and blessed with a most delightful air, insomuch, that it enjoys a double summer, or rather a perpetual spring. This city, which some assert to be the *Saphar* of *Ptolemy*, towards the beginning of the last century, consisted of good houses built with lime and stone, and was as large as *Bristol*. The best part of *Arabia Felix*, or that which the *Greeks* called most happy, was probably the country of *Yaman*, the delightfulness and plenty of which ought to be attributed to its mountains, which being well watered enjoy an almost perpetual spring, and yield great plenty and variety of fruits, particularly excellent coffee, corn, grapes, and spices. That part of the country lying along the *Red Sea*, where there are no mountains, is a dry barren desert, in some places ten or twelve leagues over. There are few rivers of note in *Yaman*, as the streams which descend from the mountains seldom reach the sea,

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sea, being for the most part drunk up and lost in the burning sands of that coast*.

The province of *Hejaz* is limited on the south by *Yaman* and *Tehuma*; on the west, by the sea *al Kolzom*, or the *Red Sea*; on the north, by the deserts of *Syria*; and on the east, by the province of *Naid*. The greatest part of *Hejaz* is covered with dry sands, or rises into barren rocks. Its chief towns, deserving attention on account of their antiquity, are the following. *Mecca*, sometimes also called *Becca*, both which words signifying a place of great intercourse, is certainly one of the most antient cities in the world. It stands in a stoney and barren valley, surrounded on all sides by the mountains, and about forty miles from the sea. It is supposed to have derived its name from *Mesha*, a son of *Ishmael*, and the *Arabians* shew a white stone in one of their temples, which they say is *Ishmael's* sepulchre. The people of *Mecca* have no corn of their own growth; but they are supplied with dates in vast abundance from the adjacent country, and with grapes from sixty miles distance. The *Arabs* have a tradition, that *Ishmael*, with his mother *Hagar*, fixed their residence here, which seems to have induced them frequently to visit *Mecca*, and hold it in high veneration, even before the age of *Mohammed*.

The next famous city in *Hejaz* is *Medina*, which, till *Mohammed's* retreat thither, was called *Yathreb*. It stands in a plain, surrounded with a brick wall, about thirty miles from the coast of the *Red Sea*. As *Mohammed* lies buried here, and met with a kind reception in this city, when he was driven from *Mecca*, the *Arabians* dignify it with the title of the *City of the Prophet*.

The city *Taifa*, or *Thaifa*, stands about sixty miles to the east of *Mecca*. *Giudda*, or *Jodda*, is situated on the *Red Sea*, opposite to the *Aidab*, on the confines of *Abassia*. On the coast next to *Medina* stands *Yanbo*, the district of which was inhabited by the *Ilhasanites*, who lived in tents, and moved from one place to another. *Madia*, the *Modiana* of *Ptolemy*, and *Midian*, or *Madian*, of scripture, is a city of *Hejaz*, little better than a heap of ruins. It stands on the eastern shore of the *Red Sea*, at no great distance from the gulf of *Ailah*.

Tehama is a small province, bounded on the west by the *Red Sea*, and inclosed on the other sides by *Hejaz* and *Yaman*. *Abulfeda* mentions several towns in this province, which, though undoubtedly of great antiquity, seem to have been unknown to the *Greeks* and *Romans*. The *Tamna* of *Pliny* and *Thumna* of *Ptolemy*, by the latitude he assigns it, seems to bear some relation to *Tehama*.

* La Roque Voy. de l' Arab. Ptol. Strab. Plin. Golius ad Alfragan.

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The province of *Naid*, which word signifies a rising country, lies between *Yaman*, *Hejaz*, and *Yamama*, and is limited on the east by *Irah*.

Yamama is encompassed by *Naid*, *Tchama*, *Babrein*, *Oman*, *Shihr*, *Hadramaut*, and *Saba*. The chief city is *Yamama*, which gives name to the province, and was antiently called *Jaw*, or *Giauva*.

Babrein, in the most extensive acceptation of the word, denotes that maritime tract lying between *Basra* and the farthest limits of *Oman*, having acquired the name of *Babrein*, or the country of the two seas, because it connects the *Persian gulf* with the *Indian ocean*. In a more confined sense it is applied to two islands of the *Persian gulf*, which, we may observe, was sometimes called the *Red Sea* by the antients, though for what reason is uncertain. There are several islands, both in the *Arabian* and *Persian gulfs*, mentioned by *Diodorus*, *Strabo*, *Ptolemy*, and others; but as they are of no note, it would be needless to detain our readers with an account of them.

In very early times, some of the descendants of *Cush* fixed themselves in *Arabia Petræa*, and afterwards extended themselves more southward along the coast of the *Red Sea*, both in *Arabia Deserta* and *Felix*. The cities *Saba*, *Sabota*, *Rhegana*, *Rhegama*, *Sabe*, *Saptha*, *Dedan*, and the country of the *Sabæi*, seem plainly to refer to their supposed original founders, *Seba*, *Sabtah*, *Regma* or *Raamah*, *Sabtechah*, *Sheba*, and *Dedan*, the sons and grandsons of *Cush*. However, the *Arab* writers take little or no notice of the *Cushites*, and it would seem that many of them made settlements in other parts.

The *Casubim*, *Caphtorim*, and *Horites*, occupying the hilly district about Mount *Seir*, though very antient, never made any considerable figure. The posterity of *Edom*, who succeeded them, in process of time intermixed with the proper *Arabs*. The present *Arabians*, nevertheless, do not look upon *Esau*, or *Edom*, as one of the proper founders of their nation. The *Arraceni* of *Pliny*, or the *Saracens*, were sometimes denominated *Agareni*, and are supposed to have been the descendants of *Ishmael*, and to have acquired their name from his mother *Hagar*. *Dioscorides*, according to the learned *Salmasius*, was the first of the antients now extant, who prefixed the hissing letter *S* to the word *Arraceni**.

The oriental writers divide the *Arabs* into two classes, namely, the old lost *Arabians*, and the present. Though the old *Arabians* were very numerous, yet they are now either all destroyed or lost, and swallowed up among the other tribes; nor are there any certain records extant concerning them. The present *Arabs*, according to their own histo-

* Gagnier. diatrib. Pocock. Steph. Byzant. Plin. l. 6. et Salmas, in exerc.

The *Arabs* rians, are sprung from two stocks, *Kahtan*, the same with sprung *Joktan*, the son of *Eber*; and *Adnan*, descended in a direct line from *Ishmael*, the son of *Abraham* and *Hagar*. The offspring of the former they call *al Arab al Ariba*, that is, the genuine *Arabs*; and those of the latter, *al Arab al Mostareba*, that is, *naturalized*, or *engrafted Arabs*. As the *Arabs* are not agreed as to the number of descents between *Ishmael* and *Adnan*, they seldom trace their genealogies higher than the latter, whom they therefore look upon as the father of their tribes. The eastern writers scarce take any notice at all of *Abraham's* progeny by *Keturah*, though they undoubtedly made up a considerable part of the inhabitants of *Arabia*. Their names were *Zimran*, *Jokshan*, *Medan*, *Midian*, or *Madian*, *Ishbak*, and *Shuah*. The *Arabs* look upon the descendants of *Ishmael* as their naturalized countrymen, because *Ishmael* married a genuine *Arabian*. The scripture, however, says, that she was an *Egyptian*, which greatly shakes the authority of their historians, except it should be admitted, that he had a second wife, or several at once. His sons were *Nebaioth*, *Kedar*, *Adeel*, *Mibsam*, *Mishma*, *Dumah*, *Massa*, *Hadar*, *Jema*, *Jetur*, *Naphish*, and *Kedemah*, besides which he had a daughter named *Mahalath* and *Bashemath*, whom *Edom* took to wife. Some writers make *Kahtan* a descendant of *Ishmael*, but among the orientals this is not the most received opinion. It best agrees, however, with the *Chaldee* and *Arabic* paraphrasts, who believed the name of *Ishmaelites* to be as extensive and general as that of *Arabs*.

As the customs, manners, and genius of the *Arabs*, except in matters of religion, are in effect the same at this day that they were betwixt three and four thousand years ago, we may therefore presume, that the antient and modern forms of government of this nation may be considered as agreeing in almost all particulars. The *Arabes Scenitæ* therefore, like the present *Bedoweens*, their successors, were governed by *Shekhs* and *Emirs*. The *Shekhs* superintended only particular *daw-wars*, or collections of tents. The *Emirs*, or *Phylarchs* of the *Greeks*, ruled over a whole tribe, and consequently their authority extended to many of those *daw-wars*. The *Emirs* probably were under the domination of one particular prince, who was the sovereign of these *Arabs*, or at least was distinguished from the other *Emirs* by the title of the *Grand Emir*, agreeable to the form of government prevailing among the modern *Bedoweens*, being looked upon by them as their supreme magistrate, without, however, enjoying a despotic authority. The *Arabs* that dwelt in cities and towns were probably governed in the same manner as those who lived in tents; and we learn from *Eratosthenes* in *Strabo*, that several cities in *Arabia Felix*, particularly those of the *Abramitæ*, were governed by princes of their own. The order of succession in those cities was not hereditary, but the first child born in any of the noble families,

families, after the king's accession, was deemed the presumptive heir to the crown. As soon therefore as any prince ascended the throne, a list was taken of all the pregnant ladies of family, who were guarded in a proper manner till one of them was delivered of a son, who always received an education suitable to his high birth. However, from *Strabo* it also appears, that the *Sabæan* nation had only one sovereign, which manifestly implies, that all the little princes above mentioned had a supreme head presiding over them. That regal government prevailed here, seems confirmed from scripture, when the *Psalmist* mentions the kings of *Arabia* and *Saba*.

The *Arabians*, for some centuries, were under the government of the descendants of *Kahtan*, *Yarab* and *Jorham*, two of his sons, founding the kingdoms of *Yaman* and *Hedjaz*. The kings of *Hamyar* possessed the best part of the kingdom of *Yaman*, and had the general title of *Tobba*, or *Successor*. Several lesser princes reigned in the other parts of *Yaman*, and were mostly, if not altogether, subject to the king of *Hamyar*, whom they called *the great king* *.

Before the time of *Mohammed*, gross idolatry chiefly prevailed in *Arabia*, but intermixed with the idolaters there were also great numbers of Christians, Jews, and Magians. The *Arabian* idolaters were *Sabians*, and worshipped the fixed stars and planets, and the angels and their images, which they honoured as inferior deities and mediators with God. The *Arabians* had seven celebrated temples dedicated to the seven planets. Besides the stars, which were the general objects of worship throughout *Arabia*, there were some more particularly revered in particular provinces. Thus the sun was chiefly worshipped by the *Hamyarites*; the Bull's eye at *Misum*; *Jupiter* at *Lakhm* and *Jodam*; *Canopus* at *Tay*; the Dog-star at *Kais*, &c. The *Arabians*, together with the *Indians* in general, paid a greater regard to the fixed stars than to the planets, which distinguished the *Sabians* amongst them from those among the *Greeks*, who directed their worship to the planets. All kinds of alterations in the atmosphere were attributed by the *Arabians* to the influence of the fixed stars; but some reckoned the effect to proceed from their rising, and others from their setting.

Of the angels or intelligencies which they worshipped, only three are mentioned in the *Koran*, namely, *Allat*, *Al-uzzah*, and *Manah*. These they called *goddeses*, and *the daughters of God*, an appellation also given by them to their images, which they believed either to be inspired with life by God, or else to be animated by the angels, and they paid them divine honours, because they believed that they inter-

Sabiism,
the pre-
vailing re-
ligion of
the Ara-
bians.

* Gol. in not. ad Alfr. Prid. Conne l. p. 1. b. 3. Strab. l. 16. Shaw & Pocock. Appian in Lyb,

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ceded for their votaries with God. They also imagined, that the sun, moon, and fixed stars were inhabited, or rather animated and directed in their courses by mediatory intelligencies of a middle nature betwixt men and the supreme being.

Their
idols.

Allat, whom some of the *Arabs* call *Allah*, was the idol of the tribe of *Thakif*; who dwelt at *Tayef*, and a temple was consecrated to her in a place called *Nakhlah*. *Al-Uzzah*, or *Al-Ozzah*, was the idol of the tribes of *Koreish* and *Kenabnah*. *Manab* was worshipped by the tribes of *Hodhail* and *Khozaah*, possibly the *Cassianitæ* of *Ptolemy*, who dwelt between *Mecca* and *Medina*. Dr. *Pocock* seems to prove, that the *Manab* of the *Arabs* was the *Meni* of the prophet *Isaiab*. This idol was a large stone, demolished by one *Saad*, in the eighth year of the *Hejra*. Besides these, five antediluvian idols are taken notice of by the *Arabian* writers, who likewise mention several other images worshipped by different tribes*.

According to Sir *Isaac Newton*, the worship of deified dead men was no older than the age of *Sesac*, the great *Egyptian* conqueror, who ordered all the nations he conquered, and, among the rest, some of the *Arabians*, to pay divine honours to his father *Ammon*. *Sesac*, who enjoined this worship, Sir *Isaac* thinks, was the *Bacchus* of the antients. According to *Suidas*, the *Arabs* also worshipped *Mars*. The idols of the *Arabs* were in general so numerous, that they might, if they pleased, worship a fresh one every day in the year. Besides their public idols, every housekeeper had his household god, whom he last took leave of, and first saluted, at his going abroad and returning home. Many of the *Arabian* idols were no more than large rude stones, the worship of which, the posterity of *Ishmael* are said to have first introduced. The tribe of *Hanifa* had one peculiar idol, which was nothing more than a lump of dough, that nothing but the greatest famine could compel them to eat.

The Ma-
gian reli-
gion in
Arabia.

The *Persians*, by their vicinity to the *Arabians*, and frequent intercourse with them, introduced the Magian religion among some of their tribes. The professors of this religion acknowledge the world to have been created by God; but being at a loss to account for the origin of evil, they held two principles, a good and an evil one, which last, however, they in general did not believe to be eternal. They also maintained, that there were good and bad angels, the former guarding and protecting men from evil, and the latter instigating them to all wickedness.

Some of the idolatrous *Arabs* believed neither a creation past, nor a resurrection to come, attributing the origin of things to nature, and their dissolution to age. Others al-

* *Pocock*. D' *Herbelot*. *Bibl. orient.* *Hetting.*

flowed both, among whom were those who at their death had their camel tied by their sepulchre, and so left without meat or drink to perish, and accompany them to the other world, lest they should be obliged at the resurrection to go on foot. Some believed a transmigration of the soul thro' different bodies, and that of the blood near the dead person's brain was formed a bird named *Hamah*, which once in an hundred years visited the sepulchre. Others said, that the bird was animated by the soul of him that was unjustly slain, and continually cried *Oscuni, Oscuni, Give me to drink*, meaning of the murderer's blood, till his death was revenged, and then it flew away.

Judaism is said to have been introduced among the idolatrous *Hamyarites* about seven hundred years before *Mohammed* by one of the kings of *Yaman*. Great numbers of Jews likewise upon the destruction of their country by the *Romans*, fled into *Arabia*, and made proselytes of several tribes. In time they became very powerful, and possessed themselves of several towns and fortresses. One *Yusel*, king of *Yaman*, having at last raised a terrible persecution against all who would not turn Jews, *Caleb*, or *Elefbhaan*, king of *Ethiopia*, to revenge the massacre of the Christians at *Najran*, put an end to Judaism and the kingdom of the *Hamyarites* in *Yaman* at the same time.

The *Arabians* we find ranked amongst those nations, some of whose members first had the happiness of being made converts to Christianity. When the eastern church was greatly harassed and persecuted about the beginning of the third century, vast numbers of Christians sought for shelter in *Arabia*, and many *Arabian* tribes embraced Christianity. As the Christians were very numerous in *Arabia* before the age of *Mohammed*, they had several bishops there. The *Jacobites* had two bishops of the *Arabs* subject to their *Mafrian*, or metropolitan of the east. One of these was stiled absolutely the bishop of the *Arabs*, and the other, the bishop of the *Scenite Arabs*. In the century preceding the famous *Mohammed*, *Gregentius*, who held a dispute of three days continuance with *Herbanus* a Jew, was bishop of *Dhafar*, or *Zephra*, and at the same time *Najran* was also a bishop's see. The *Nestorians* had but one bishop, who was immediately subject to their patriarch. As the Christians in *Arabia* were soon divided into several sects, so likewise were the antient pagan inhabitants, who in different places held different tenets*.

The *Arabian* language was early distinguished into two dialects. The first, termed the *Arabic* of *Hamyar*, was spoken by the *Hamyarites*, and other genuine *Arabs*; and the other, stiled the *pure*, in which *Mohammed* wrote the *Koran*. The former dialect is supposed to have approached to the *Syriac*, and the latter, which is referred to *Ishmael* as its

* *Asseman bibl. orient.* Pocock. Salesprelim. discourse.
author,

author, had a relation to the *Hebrew*. The *Arabs* are full of the commendations of their language, which is very harmonious and expressive, and, as they say, so immensely copious, that no man uninspired can be a perfect master of it in its utmost extent. We are told, that one of the most learned of the *Arab* grammarians wrote a whole treatise, which consisted intirely of an interpretation of five hundred words, signifying a *lion*. The author of the great *Arabic lexicon*, called *Cannus*, or the *Ocean*, mentions one of his books, wherein he had enumerated above a thousand words denoting only a sword. The *Arabs*, nevertheless, believe the greatest part of their language to be lost, which will not seem improbable, when we consider how late the art of writing became generally practised among them. For tho' it was known to *Job* their countryman, to the *Edomites*, and the other *Arabian* nations, bordering on *Egypt* and *Phœnicia*, and also to the *Hamyarites*, many centuries before *Mohammed*; yet the other *Arabs*, and those of *Mecca* in particular, unless such of them as were either Jews or Christians, were to the time of *Moramer*, perfectly ignorant of it. Since the reign of *Justinian*, and especially since the age of *Mohammed*, all the *Arabic* dialects have been not a little corrupted; the *Mohammedans*, therefore, now study the ancient *Arabic*, which is looked upon by them as the learned language, and nearly resembling the *Ethiopic*.

The character used by the *Hamyarites* was the most antient of any peculiar to the *Arabs*, and was called *al mosnad*, because the letters were not distinctly separate, but connected together. According to the author of the great *Arabic* lexicon, an inscription in it was found in *Yaman* as old as the time of *Joseph*. *Moramer Ebn Morra*, who lived not many years before *Mohammed*, was the inventor of the present *Arabic* character, which the oriental writers agree to be very different from the antient letters of the *Arabs*. The invention of *Moramer* was afterwards improved by different persons.

The
learning
of the
antient
Aravians.

Though before *Mohammed* by far the greatest part of the *Arabs* could neither read nor write, yet several of them became famous for their eloquence, and a perfect skill in their own tongue, in which they exercised themselves by composing of orations and poems. Their orations were of two sorts, metrical and prosaic, and they endeavoured to excel in both. Whoever was able in an assembly to persuade the people to a great enterprize, or dissuade them from a dangerous one, or gave them other prudent counsel, was honoured with the title of *Khateb*, or orator, which is now given to the *Mohammedan* preachers. It appears from several authors, that they pursued a method very different from that of the *Greek* and *Roman* orators, their sentences being like loose gems, without connection, so that the audience were struck chiefly by the fullness of the periods, the elegance of the

the expression, and the acuteness of the proverbial sayings. So persuaded were they of their excelling in oratory, that they would not allow any nation to understand the art of speaking in public, except themselves and the *Persians*. They seem to have been chiefly indebted to their poetry for the polishing, and even the preservation, of their language, before the use of letters was introduced among them. In their poems were likewise preserved the distinction of descents, the rights of tribes, and the memory of great actions. An excellent poet therefore reflected an honour on his tribe, which was thereupon congratulated in a solemn manner by the other tribes. Poetry being in the highest esteem among them, they looked upon it as a great accomplishment, and a proof of ingenuous extraction, to be able to express oneself in verse with ease and elegance on any extraordinary occurrence, and even in their common discourse made frequent applications of celebrated passages of their famous poets. To keep up a spirit of emulation among their poets, the tribes held a general assembly once a year, at a place called *Ocadh*, where a week's fair was kept. The *Arabs*, during this annual meeting, which lasted a whole month, employed themselves not only in trading, but in repeating their poetical compositions, zealously contending and vying with each other for the prize. The poems that were judged to excel were laid up in their king's treasuries, and also hung up in their chief temple, being written on *Egyptian* silk, and in letters of gold. The public congratulation that we mentioned above was made only on the birth of a boy, the rise of a poet, and the fall of a foal of a generous breed, which they reckoned three points of felicity. The fair and assembly of *Ocadh* was suppressed by *Mohammed*, which occasioned poetry to decline in his time; but after the *Arabs* had laid aside their views of extending their conquests, this study was revived, and almost all sorts of learning encouraged, and not a little improved by them. This interruption, however, occasioned the loss of most of their antient pieces of poetry, which were then chiefly preserved by memory.

The year was divided among the *Arabians* into twelve months, and six seasons, namely, the season of herbs and flowers; the summer; the hot season; the season of fruits; autumn, or rather the latter part of autumn; and, lastly, winter. The *Arabs* likewise antiently computed their time by weeks, or periods of seven days.

The sciences that were chiefly cultivated by the antient *Arabians* were that of their history and genealogies, the interpretation of dreams, and such a knowledge of the stars as to foretell the changes of weather. They valued themselves extremely on account of the nobility of their families, and took the greatest pains in settling their descents. Though other nations almost confined their observations to the

The sciences chiefly cultivated by them.

the planets, yet the *Arabians* and *Indians* applied themselves to observe the fixed stars. The asterisms, or stars, they most usually foretold the weather by, were those they called *amva*, or the houses of the moon. These are twenty-eight in number, and divide the zodiac into as many parts, thro' one of which the moon passes every night. They seem for a long time to have made no farther progress in astronomy, which in latter ages they cultivated with much success and applause, than to name the constellations, and to observe their influence upon the weather. As a full proof of the high antiquity of the names of several stars and asterisms, among the *Arabs*, it will be sufficient to observe, that some of these names were prior to the time of *Job*. The *Arabs* addicted themselves to the Onirotic art, or the art of interpreting dreams, in common with the *Egyptians*, *Chaldeans*, and other nations. They likewise practised divination by arrows, and, as is probable, something of judicial astrology *.

It appears from *Strabo*, that the *Arabs* had a good degree of knowledge in several mechanical arts, some of them having magnificent temples, and elegant houses, built in the *Egyptian* taste. The exercise of arms and horsemanship they looked upon as one of their principal accomplishments, being obliged to practise it from their infancy, on account of the independency of their tribes, which rendered bloody encounters very frequent among them. Their principal arms were bows and arrows, darts, or javelins, and broad swords, or scymetars.

Character
of the
Arabs.

The antient *Arabs*, like other nations, had their good and bad qualities. Hospitality was so habitual to them, that in this they seem to have exceeded all their neighbours. The contrary vice was so much in contempt among the *Arabs*, that a certain poet upbraids the inhabitants of *Waset*, as with the greatest reproach, that none of their men had the heart to give, nor their women to deny. As a mark of their hospitable disposition, the *Arabs* used to light fires on the tops of the hills, which in the night conducted travellers to their tents, and assured them of a kind reception. The highest compliment that could be paid to a man was, to pass an encomium upon his munificence; as that most acceptable to a woman was to celebrate her parsimony and her beauty. The antient *Arabs* have likewise been commended for being exact to their words, and respectful to their kindred; and they have always been celebrated for their quickness of apprehension and penetration, as well as for the vivacity of their wit. On the other hand, their own writers acknowledge, that the *Arabs* had a natural inclination to war, bloodshed, cruelty, and rapine, and were so much addicted to bear malice, that they scarce ever forgot an old grudge.

* *Possok* ut supra. *Sale's preliminary discourse*. *Golius*.

The antient *Scenite Arabs*, *Ishmaelites*, or *Nabathæans*, in consequence of the divine prediction, lived upon plunder. and harassed their neighbours by continual incursions. Their posterity are no less infamous at present, on account of the robberies they commit on merchants and travellers. They endeavour to excuse their proceedings, by alledging the hard usage of their father *Ishmael*; who being turned out of doors by *Abram*, had the open plains and deserts given him by God for his patrimony, with permission to take whatever he could find there. In relating their adventures they never say that they robbed a man of such or such a thing, but that they gained it. The strictest probity at the same time is observed in their camp, where every thing is open, and nothing ever known to be stolen.

The *Arabs*, who dwelt in cities and towns, were more civilized, and lived by tillage, the cultivation of palm-trees, the breeding and feeding of cattle, and the exercise of all sorts of trades, particularly merchandizing; wherein they were very eminent, even in the time of *Jacob*, their country producing immense quantities of the most precious commodities, particularly the finest gold; which was in such plenty among them, that they would give double the weight of gold for iron, triple its weight for brass, and ten times its weight for silver*.

The following were some of the principal customs of the antient *Arabs*.

The king, among the *Sabæans*, was solemnly invested with The cust his prerogative by an assembly of the people; and was enjoined toms of never to go out of his palace during his reign on pain of being the *Arabs*. stoned to death by his subjects. The antient *Arabs* used circumcision; but authors differ as to the age when the ceremony was performed. They were extremely addicted to divination and augury. When a person distrusting the fidelity of his wife went a journey, he tied together some of the boughs of a tree called *al rotam*; and if, upon his return, he found them in the same position, he judged she had been faithful to him, otherwise not.

All the kinds of augury and divination were forbid by *Mohammed*, as likewise the plays of chess, dice, cards, and other games. When a she-camel, or ew, had brought forth twins ten times, she had an ear cut off, and was afterwards sent to graze at liberty, but women were never permitted to taste of her flesh. Many of the *Arabs* scrupled not to marry their father's wife, who, as they imagined, belonged to one of the sons by an hereditary right; but this the most virtuous among them condemned as a crime. Some of them married two sisters, and most of them went on pilgrimage to the *Caaba*,

* Diod. Sic. l. 2, Strab. l. 14.

or chief temple, whither they turned themselves always when they prayed. They frequently washed their mouths and nostrils, combed their hair, cleaned their teeth, paired their nails, and had other usages conducive to external purification. Whenever any one was found guilty of theft, they immediately cut off his right hand.

In *Arabia Felix*, the king's brothers preceded his sons, and had greater respect shewn them, as being more advanced in years. Adultery they punished with death, but esteemed him only guilty of it who had to do with a woman of another tribe. The *Nabathæans* inflicted punishment publicly on such as squandered away their substance, but paid great respect to such as increased it. Their phylarchs had so little power, that they were almost upon a level with the populace, and had their conduct frequently inspected into. It was a common custom among the *Saracens*, or *Scenite Arabs*, to have hired wives, who married in one place, brought forth in another, and educated their children in a third.

According to some authors, the antient *Arabs* circumcised their daughters as well as their sons. In their wars they brought into the field a great number of camels, carrying each of them two archers, sitting back to back, that, in any general action, they might be able to oppose the enemy both in front and in rear at the same time *.

The descendants of Joktan settle in Arabia.

Arabia, as we have already mentioned, was first planted by *Joktan* and his thirteen sons, a short time after the confusion of languages at *Babel*. According to an *Arabian* author, *Joktan*, or *Kabtan*, had thirty-two sons by the same wife; of whom all but two leaving *Arabia*, went and settled in *India*. The two that remained were *Yarab* and *Jorham*; the first of whom succeeded his father in the kingdom of *Yaman*, and the latter founded the kingdom of *Hejaz*, where his posterity kept the throne till the time of *Ishmael*.

which is likewise peopled by *Ishmael's* posterity.

Hagar, and her young son *Ishmael*, upon being dismissed by *Abraham*, retired into the wilderness, where they were supported by the divine favour and assistance. Before the birth of *Ishmael*, God had assured his mother that her son should be the father of a most numerous and potent nation; that he and his descendants should be wild, and live in enmity with the rest of mankind; and yet that they never should be thoroughly conquered by any foreign power. All accounts, both of the antients and moderns, manifest the truth of this prediction †.

* Diod. l. 2 & 3. Agatharcid. Cnid. Joseph. Antiq. l. 1: Adrian. Reland. de rel. Moham. Pocock.

† Diod. & Strab. ut Supra. La Roque voy. Dr. Jackson's work Revelat. examined with Candour.

Ishmael, as we learn from scripture, resided in the wildernesses of *Paran*, and married an *Egyptian*. He had twelve sons, and died at the age of one hundred and thirty-seven years, probably not far from the borders of *Egypt*. The *Arab* writers say that he married the daughter of *Modad*, king of *Hejaz*, descended lineally from *Forham*. The *Scenite Arabs* were not the only descendants of *Ishmael*, though probably they might be the bulk of them, since *Moses* informs us that some *Ishmaelites* had castles and towns.

The principal kings of the *Arabs* were those of *Hamyar*, or *Yaman*, *Hira Gbassan*, and *Hejaz*. The *Hamyarites* were called *Homerites* by the latter *Greek* and *Latin* authors; and *Immirenians* by *Theodorus Lecter*. Their first king they reckoned *Kabtan*, or *Joktan*, the son of *Eber*, whose son *Yarab* or *Joktan*, succeeded him, and left the throne to his son *Yashab*. *Abd* king of *Shems*, that is, the servant of the Sun, succeeded his father *Yashab*; and, according to the *Arabian* historians, was very successful in his expeditions against his enemies. He had many sons, but the most noted of them was *Hamyar*, *Amru*, *Cablan*, and *Asbaar*. *Hamyar*, according to the oriental writers, was so called from the red clothes he wore; and communicated his name to the kingdom of *Yaman*; from whence he expelled *Tbamud*, who took refuge in *Hejaz*. *Wayel*, the son of *Hamyar*, according to *Abulfeda*, succeeded him in the kingdom; but other authors make his brother *Cablan* his successor. The following princes were *Alsalsac*, *Yaasar*, *Deu Riyash*, *Al Noomon*, *Asmah*, *Shaddad*, *Lokman*, *Dhu Sadad*, *Al Hareth*, and *Dhul Karnain Assaab*. This according to *Ebn Abbas*, was the two-horned prince mentioned in the *Koran*, and not *Alexander the Great*. The next successors were *Dhul Manar Abraham*, *Africus*, who they alledge gave his name to that part of the world called *Africa*, *Dhul Adaramru*, *Sharhabil*, *Al Hodhad*, *Balkis*, the son, but, according to others, the daughter, of *Hodhad*, and that famous queen of *Sheba*, who had an interview with *Solomon* at *Jerusalem*. The successors of *Balkis* were *Nasherol'neam*, *Shamer Yaraash*, who gave name to the city of *Samarcand*, and *Abu Malec*. Upon the decease of *Abu Malec*, the kingdom of *Yaman* was translated to *Amran*, a descendant of *Cablan*, the brother of *Hamyar*. The next prince was *Amru*, surnamed the *Tearer*, because every night he tore to pieces two garments he had wore the preceding day. His successors were *Al Alkran*, *Dhu Habshan*, *Tobba*, *Colaicarb*, *Abu Carb Asaad*, who first introduced *Judaism* among the *Hamyarites*, and was put to death by his subjects, probably on the score of religion. *Hassan Tobbai*, *Amru Tobbai*, surnamed the *Lord of wood*, because during his whole reign he was so infirm and indisposed, that he was always carried about in a wooden chair; *Abd Celal*, *Tobba*, *Al Hareth*, who embraced *Judaism*; *Morthed*, *Waqian*, *Abraham*, and *Sabban*, or, according to some, *Ebn Dakikan*, who was in possession of a famous sword, with which it

is said he cut in two several noble swords sent him as a present by the *Greek* emperor in the presence of that prince's ambassadors, without doing it the least damage. After these forty-one princes reigned *Dhu Shanater*, *Yusef*, who, as we mentioned in the *Ethiopian* history, persecuted all who would not embrace Judaism, and *Dhu fadan*, reckoned by *Abulfeda* the last prince of the *Hamyaritic* line; though others reckon *Yusef* to have been the last of the true race of *Hamyar*. *Yusef*, they say, being driven to the last extremity by *Elesbaan*, king of *Ethiopia*, forced his horse into the sea, and lost both his crown and life together. The *Najasbi*, or king of *Ethiopia*, after his death, established the Christian religion in *Yaman*, and left the throne to *Aryat*, an *Ethiopian*. The second *Ethiopian* king, or rather viceroy, was *Abraham Ebn al Sabah*, who, we are informed in the *Alcoran*, was most miraculously defeated, as he was marching with an army and several elephants to destroy the *Cauba*, or idol temple of the *Meccans*. He was succeeded by his son *Yacsum*, whose brother *Masruk* next ascended the throne, and was the last of the *Ethiopian* princes in *Yaman*. The *Ethiopians*, according to some eastern writers, occupied the kingdom of *Hamyar* seventy-two years.

The king of *Ethiopia* appoints a viceroy in *Hamyar*.

Duration of the kingdom of *Hamyar*.

The inundation of *Saba*, or *Al Arem*.

Seif Ebn Dhu Yazan, of the old royal family of *Hamyar*, obtained succours of the king of *Persia*, which had been denied him by the emperor *Heraclius*; and driving out the *Ethiopians* recovered the throne; but was himself slain soon after by some of them who had been left behind. The *Persians* appointed the succeeding princes *Wahzar*, *Marzaban*, *Sihan*, *Jorjis*, or *Georgius*, and *Bazan*, who submitted to *Mohammed*, and embraced his new religion. *Mohammed*, on this account, gave to *Shahr*, the son of *Bazan*, part of his father's dominions. The petty princes, tributary to the king of *Hamyar*, were stiled *Al Kail*; and the governors of provinces *Al Makawel*. According to *Abulfeda*, the monarchy of *Hamyar* continued two thousand and twenty years; but, according to others, above three thousand years*.

Abd Shems, surnamed *Saba*, the fourth king after *Joktan*, built a city to which he gave the name of *Saba*; and in the hollow of the mountains above the city made an immense basin, or reservoir, by raising, in different places, large mounds, by which he confined the water that ran from many adjacent mountains. The neighbouring country was supplied with water from thence, and the mounds were built so strong that many houses were erected upon them. God, however, resolving to humble and disperse the inhabitants, on account of their pride and insolence, sent a mighty flood, which broke down the mound by night; when the water, which was

* Pocock. D'Herbelot. Bibl. Orient. Prideaux's life of Mah. Sales tranflat. of the Koran. Golius ut supra.

near twenty fathoms in height, rushed out, and carried away the whole city, with the neighbouring towns and people. This calamity, according to the most received opinion, happened about the time of *Alexander the Great*. No less than eight tribes were forced to abandon their dwellings on this occasion; some of which gave rise to the kingdoms of *Hira* and *Ghassen*. Probably at this time also happened the migration of those tribes or colonies which were led into *Mesopotamia* by three different chiefs; *Beer*, *Modar*, and *Rabia*.

The kingdom of *Hira* was founded in *Chaldæa*, or *Irack*. The founder by *Malec*, a descendant of *Cablan*, who is said to have flourished in the time of the kings of the provinces; that is, of the governors whom *Alexander the Great* appointed to preside over the provinces of *Persia*. *Malec* was succeeded by his brother *Hira*. *Amru*, and afterwards by his son *Jodaimah*, who first used, among the *Arabs*, that military engine called a *balista*. *Jodaimah* defeated *Amru*, an *Arab* prince of the tribe of *Amalec*, who reigned in *Mesopotamia*, and put him to the sword; but was afterwards assassinated by the contrivance of *Zoba*, that prince's daughter, with whom he was greatly enamoured. The next prince was *Amru*, the nephew of *Jodaimah*, who revenged his uncle's murder by putting *Zoba* to death. He was succeeded by his son *Amriol Kais*, whose successor was *Amru*, his son. The two next princes were *Amalekites*; after whom *Amriol Kais*, the son of *Amru*, ascended the throne, which he left to his son *Al Nooman*, who, after he had reigned thirty years abdicated the government and retired from the world, saying, *What signifies a kingdom that will certainly have an end?* *Al Nooman*, it is said, became a convert to the Christian religion; and, in consequence thereof, thought fit to resign the reins of government to his son *Hendu*. *Jezdegerd*, king of *Persia*, committed the care of his son's education, and the establishment of his constitution, to *Al Noorman*. *Al Monda Ebn Noomah*, the *Hendu* of the *Persian* historians, attended *Babaram*, the son of *Jezdegerd*, into *Persia*, with an army of forty thousand men, to enable him to dethrone one *Kersa*, an usurper, whom the *Magi* had elected king. *Al Mondar* was succeeded by his son *Al Aswad*, who left the throne to his brother, whose name is not known. The three following princes were *Al Kamah*, *Amriol Kais*, and *Al Mondar*; which last was dethroned by *Kofru Kobad*, king of *Persia*, who placed upon the throne *Al Hareth Ebn Amru*. *Anushirwan*, surnamed the *Just*, the son and successor of *Cobad*, drove out *Al Hareth*, and restored the *Mondar* family to the throne of *Hira*. *Al Mondar* being restored by *Anushirwan*, left the throne to a son of his own name; in the eighth year of whose reign the impostor *Mohammed* was born. The three next princes were *Kabus*, *Al Mondar*, and *Al Nooman*; which last became a convert to Christianity on the following occasion:

In a drunken fit he had ordered two of his intimate companions, who had fallen asleep, to be buried alive; but, being

afterwards extremely concerned for what he had done, he raised a monument to the memory of his friends, and set apart two days ; one of which he called the day of sorrow, and the other the day of gladness. All who met him on the former day, he caused to be slain, and their blood sprinkled on the monument : but those who met him on the other day, were dismissed in safety with magnificent presents. An *Arab* who had formerly entertained him when fatigued with hunting, happened to meet him on one of the unfortunate days. The king was greatly perplexed, and, scrupling to put him to death against the laws of hospitality, which the *Arabs* religiously observe, gave him a year's respite, and sent him home with rich gifts, another person having offered himself as surety for his return. When the last day of the term came, and the *Arab* did not appear, the king, not at all displeased to save his host's life, ordered the surety to be brought out to execution ; but the *Arab* in the mean time appearing, the king was surprised at his generosity, and asked him his motive for offering himself to certain death. He answered, that he had been taught to act in that manner by the religion which he professed ; and *Al Nooman* demanding what religion that was, he answered, the Christian. The king then desiring the doctrines of religion to be explained to him, was baptized, together with all his subjects ; and not only pardoned the man, but abolished his barbarous custom.

This prince, however, was not the first king of *Hira* who professed himself a convert to the Christian religion ; his grandfather, *Al Mondar*, the son of *Amriol Kais*, having embraced the Christian faith, had built large churches in his capital. *Al Nooman*, after a reign of twenty-two years, was slain by *Khofru Parwiz*, when *Ayas*, the *Tayite*, ascended the throne. *Ayas*, during whose reign *Mohammed's* mission commenced, was succeeded by *Zadawaih*, the son of *Mahan*. Upon the death of *Zadawaih*, *Al Mondar*, the son of the late *Al Nooman*, governed *Hira*, till that kingdom was conquered by the arms of *Khaled Ebn al Walid*.

The kingdom of
Ghassan.

The kingdom of *Ghassan* was founded about the same time with that of *Hira*, after the inundation of *Al Arem*, or *Saba*, above-mentioned. This kingdom, which lay in *Syria Damascena*, near a river called *Ghassan*, was founded by the tribe of *Azd*, who drove from thence another tribe of *Arabs* then in possession of the country. The tribe of *Azd* maintained themselves in *Ghassan*, according to *Abulfeda*, six hundred and sixteen years. Some think they were named *Ghassan* before their migration, and that they were the same with the *Cassanites* of *Ptolemy*. Five of their kings were named *Hareth*, which the *Greeks* and *Latins* wrote *Aretas* ; and one of them it was whose governor ordered the gates of *Damascus* to be watched to take *St. Paul*. Our readers may find in *Dr. Pocock* a list of the kings of *Ghassan*, of whom scarce any thing is mentioned but their names. *Jabalah*, the thirty-first and
last

last of the kings of *Ghassan*, professed Mohammedism on the great successes of the *Arabs* in *Syria* under the kalif *Omar*; but receiving afterwards a disgust from him, he returned to his former faith, and retired to *Constantinople* *.

We mentioned above, that *Forham*, the son of *Kabtan*, The king-
founded the kingdom of *Hejaz*, where princes of his line dom of
reigned till the time of *Ishmael*, who married the daughter of *Hejaz*.
Modad, one of those princes. According to some authors,
Kidar, one of *Ishmael*'s sons, had the crown resigned to him
by his uncles the *Forhamites*: but others say, that the de-
scendants of *Ishmael* expelled that tribe, who retiring to *Jo-*
hainah, were, after various fortune, at last all destroyed by
an inundation. The names of the thirteen kings of the race
of *Forham* may be found in *Dr. Pocock*. *Kidar*, the son of
Ishmael, makes the fourteenth prince. After the expulsion of
the *Forhamites*, the government of *Hejaz* seems to have been
divided among the heads of the tribes almost in the same man-
ner as the *Arabs* of the *Desert* are governed at this day. The
tribe of *Khozaah*, descended from *Cablan*, fled into the king-
dom of *Hejaz* after the inundation of *Saba*, and settling in
a valley near *Mecca*, founded an aristocracy, assuming to
themselves both the government of the city of *Mecca* and the
custody of the *Caaba*, or chief temple. They continued ma-
sters of the city and territory of *Mecca*, as well as presidents
of the *Caaba* for several ages, till, at length, *Abu Gabshan*, a
weak and silly man, in a drunken humour, sold the keys and
custody of the *Caaba* to *Kosa*, of the tribe of *Koreish*, for a
bottle of wine. The tribe of *Khozaah*, endeavouring after-
wards to give some disturbance to that of *Koreish*, in the
possession of what *Kosa* had purchased, the latter from thence
took an opportunity of divesting the former of the civil go-
vernment of *Mecca*.

Besides the kingdoms already mentioned, there were some
other tribes which, in latter times, had princes of their own,
and formed states of lesser note.

We shall conclude this history of the *Arabs* with a The A-
short account of their principal transactions with the *Egypti- rabs never*
ans, *Persians*, *Greeks* and *Romans*, extracted from the most entirely
approved writers of the two last nations. reduced

Diodorus Siculus relates, that *Sesostris*, or *Sesac*, according by the
to *Josephus* and *Sir Isaac Newton*, subdued *Arabia* in his fa- *Egyptia*
ther's life-time. However, from the same author, it appears,
that the *Arabs* were never thoroughly subjugated; for he tells
us that *Sesac* himself was obliged to draw a line from *Heliopo-*
lis to *Pelusium*, in order to secure *Egypt* from the incursions of
the *Arabs* and *Syrians*. *Sesac*, though he had a fleet of four

* *Pocock's Hist. Arab.* *Ockley's Hist. of the Saracens*, *Sale's*
Notes on the Koran.

hundred sail upon the *Red Sea*, seems, from *Diodorus*, never to have traversed *Arabia Felix*; but only to have coasted it or seized upon some of its maritime provinces in his voyage to *India*. As the word *Arabia*, in the *Greek* and *Latin* authors, sometimes denotes only *Arabia Deserta*, at other times *Arabia Petræa*; and sometimes *Arabia Felix*, or a part of that country; it cannot be inferred from them that the whole peninsula of the *Arabs* ever was in a state of servitude to the *Egyptians*.

nor by
the *Assy-*
rians,
Medes, and
Persians.

The *Assyrians*, *Medes*, and *Persians*, likewise could never get any considerable footing among the *Arabs*. The *Persian* monarchs indeed were so far respected by them as to have an annual present of frankincense; yet they could never make them tributary, and were so far from being their masters, that *Cambyfes*, on his expedition against *Egypt*, was obliged to ask their leave to pass through their territories †.

Notwithstanding the exorbitant power of *Alexander the Great*, the *Arabians* had so little apprehension of him, that they alone, of all the neighbouring nations, sent no ambassadors to him either first or last. He therefore formed a resolution of invading *Arabia*, but was cut off by death before he began that enterprize. We have formerly related the unsuccessful expeditions of *Antigonus* against the *Nabathæan Arabs* at *Petræa* †.

Only a
few of
their
tribes re-
duced by
the *Ro-*
mans.

As for the *Romans*, they never conquered any part of *Arabia*, so called. The most they did was to make some tribes tributary to them, as one commanded by *Sampsiceramus*, or *Shams' Alkeram*, who reigned at *Hems*, or *Emesia*, submitted to *Pompey*. These people, according to *Strabo*, were more civilized, and lived under a better form of government than the other *Arabs*.

As *Syria*, while under the *Romans*, was frequently invaded by the *Arabs*, in consequence of those incursions they drew upon themselves the *Roman* arms. *Pompey*, as we learn from *Plutarch*, obliged one *Aretas*, an *Arab* prince, whose dominions bordered upon *Syria* and *Mesopotamia*, to submit to him and receive a *Roman* garrison. The same general, by his lieutenant *Afranius*, likewise subdued the *Arabs* who dwelt about *Mount Amanus*: after which the king of the *Arabs* residing in *Petra* submitted himself by letter to him, but that *Pompey* ever possessed himself of that strong hold, does not appear. A few years after *Agbarus*, or, according to others, *Ariamnes*, an *Arab* emir, or phylarch, misled and deluded *Crassus* to his own destruction.

† Diod. l. 1 and 2. Herod. l. 3. Joseph. Antiq. Newton's Chron.

‡ See the History of Macedon after the death of Alex.

None of the *Romans* ever penetrated so far into *Arabia* as *The ex-Ælius Gallus*, or *Ælius Largus*, according to *Dio*, in the expedition reign of *Augustus*. *Gallus*, after traversing vast deserts, came of *Ælius Gallus*. within two days journey of those parts of *Arabia* where the spices grow. Instead of marching by land through the territories of the *Nabatheans*, he followed the treacherous advice of *Syllæus*, who conducted him the worst way, along the dangerous coast of the *Red Sea*; where, on account of the many rocks and shelves, he was fifteen days in his passage and lost many of his ships. Soon after his arrival at *Leucocome*, a maritime city of the *Nabathæans*, a strange distemper, that chiefly affected the mouth and thighs of the patient, made great havock in his army; which obliged him to remain inactive many months in that neighbourhood.

This distemper, *Dio* says, first seized the head, where if it settled it proved mortal; but, if the humour occasioning it retired into the thighs, the patient recovered.

Gallus, early in the spring, advanced to the frontiers of *Hira*, where he met with a most kind reception from *Al Hareth*, or, as *Strabo* names him, *Aretas*. After a short stay there, he advanced, and defeated a numerous body of *Arabs*, who met him upon the banks of a river with an intention to dispute his passage. He then made himself master of several considerable places, and penetrated as far as *Marsyabæ*, a city of the *Rhamanites*, which he besieged ineffectually. His men, in the mean time, being carried off daily in great numbers, by various distempers, he returned into the country of the *Nabatheans*, after a march of sixty days, and embarking his troops at *Negra*, sailed over to *Myos Hormus*, on the *Egyptian* side; from whence he led back the poor remains of his army to *Alexandria*, having spent two years in the unfortunate expedition.

Little mention is made of *Arabia* from this time till the The em- reign of *Trajan*, when *Aulus Cornelius Palma* made an entire peror *Tra-* conquest of *Arabia Petræa*, according to *Dio*. The same *jan* forced author and *Arrian*, *Eutropius* and *Lucian*, intimate that *Tra-* to retire *jan* conquered *Arabia Felix*; which seems confirmed by some out of medals coined after the fourteenth year of his reign; and, *Arabia*, that he meditated the conquest of *India*: but, that this was gross flattery, appears from the reception the *Hagarenes* gave him when he marched against them, about six years after the period above-mentioned. *Trajan* receiving intelligence that the *Hagarenes* had declared war against him, marched from *Ctesiphon* into their territories, and laid siege to their capital city, which was situated upon an high and steep mountain in a barren country. The *Romans* made a breach in the wall, but nevertheless could not reduce the place. They were repulsed by the numerous garison, and likewise by storms of wind, rain, and hail, and by dreadful flashes of lightning. They were also dazzled and affrighted by apparitions of rain-
bows,

bows, and infested in their camp by swarms of flies; so that they were obliged to raise the siege and retire*.

A short
account of
the *Arabs*
till the
time of
Moham-
med.

About eighty years after, the emperor *Severus* besieged *Atræ*, the capital of the *Arabs*, bordering on *Syria*, not being able to bear, that, of all nations, the *Hagarenes* only should stand out still against the *Romans*. Though he pushed on the siege with vigour, yet, in the end, he was obliged to withdraw with great precipitation. From this time, to the birth of *Mohammed*, few particulars of moment are related of the *Arabs* in general, or of the *Saracens*, the most noted people of them. The *Saracens*, however, we are told, ravaged *Mesopotamia* in the time of the emperor *Constantius*, and joined the *Persians* against *Julian*. *Mavia*, queen of the *Saracens*, sent a body of her troops to the assistance of the *Romans* against the *Goths*, who forced those barbarians to retire from before *Constantinople*, which metropolis they had besieged. The *Saracens*, about the year of the Christian æra, committed disorders on the frontiers of *Egypt*, *Palestine*, *Phœnicia*, and *Syria*; but soon retired of their own accord.

About forty-one years after, *Alamundarus*, or *Al Mondar*, assisted the *Persians* with a numerous army against the emperor *Theodosius*; but the greatest part of his men being seized with a panic, threw themselves headlong into the *Euphrates*, where one hundred thousand of them are said to have perished.

It appears from *Procopius*, that, in the beginning of the sixth century, a prince of the *Mondar* family ravaged all the territories of the *Romans* from the confines of *Egypt* to the borders of *Mesopotamia*, killing vast numbers of their subjects and exacting immense sums for the ransom of others taken prisoners. None of the *Roman* generals, nor any of the *Arab* phylarchs in their interest, could ever make head against him. He, in conjunction with *Azarethes*, the *Persian* general, defeated the renowned *Belisarius*, and scattered terror where-ever he came.

The *Jews*, though an inconsiderable and despised people in other parts of the world, after their dispersion, were very powerful in *Arabia*, where they brought over several tribes to their religion. The *Jews* of *Hamyar*, we are told, not far from the time of *Dhu Nowas*, above-mentioned, challenged some neighbouring Christians to a public disputation, which was held in the open air three days, before the king and his nobility, and the people. On the third day, the *Jewish* disputant demanded that *Jesus of Nazareth*, if he were really living and in Heaven, and could hear the prayers of his worshippers, should appear from Heaven in their

* Dio. l. 68. Eutrop. in Trajan. Arrian in Peripl. Fest. in brev.

fight, and they would then believe on him; whereupon, after a terrible storm of thunder and lightning, JESUS CHRIST appeared in the air, surrounded with rays of glory, walking on a purple cloud, having a sword in his hand, and an inestimable diadem on his head, and spake these words, *Behold I appear to you in your sight, I who was crucified by your fathers.* The cloud then receiving him from their sight, the Christians cried out, *Lord have mercy upon us;* but the Jews were stricken blind, and recovered not till they were all baptized †.

† Gregent. in disput. cum Herban. Sale's Preliminary Discourse. Pocock. Golius.



C H A P. II.

The History of the Arabs from the time of Mahomet, or Mohamed the Impostor, and founder of the Arabian or Saracen Empire, from the year 578, to the year 627.

THE state of religion in *Europe*, *Asia*, and other parts General of the then known world was extremely favourable to reflection. the designs of the Impostor *Mahomet*. The Christian religion was, at that time, so defaced by schism and absurdity in many places, that a virtuous paganism was far more eligible. Vast tracts of the interior parts of *Asia* were inhabited by idolaters. The Jews, the most unsociable and unamiable of all people, were there very numerous; and the *Arabs*, amongst whom that impostor arose, professed a religion, of which the ground-work was Paganism, but deformed by the absurdities of Judaism, and of degenerated Christianity. Nor were either the civil or military virtues of the times of superior excellency; the eastern empire declining in point of power, and the western being over-run by barbarism and superstition.

Such was the general state of affairs in *Europe* and in *Asia* in the year of *Christ* 578, when, on the twenty-second day Birth of of *April*, *Mahomet*, or, as he is called by the *Arabian* wri- *Mahomet*. ters, *Mohammed*, the legislator of a new empire, and the founder of a new religion, was born at *Mecca*, a city of *Arabia*. He was, according to the historians of his own times and country, lineally descended from a family that had for some time held the principality of *Mecca*; which seems to have consisted chiefly in the possession of the *Caaba*, an idolatrous

idolatrous temple, which was held in high veneration amongst the *Arabians*. The name of *Mahomet's* father was *Abdallah*, the most beautiful personage amongst his countrymen ; and his mother's name was *Amena*, who was equally distinguished, both for beauty and virtue. But, in order to give the reader a clear idea of the history of this wonderful impostor, it is necessary to premise somewhat concerning the general character of his country and countrymen.

Character
of his
country
and coun-
trymen.

The neighbourhood of *Mecca*, where *Mahomet* was born, was a barren, thirsty, soil ; but the few fruits and vegetables it produced were exquisite in their kinds. The inhabitants appear to have been totally ignorant of agriculture, and lived incredibly temperate and abstemious ; seldom tasting animal food, and almost utter strangers to all the luxuries of life. They seem, however, to have practised certain manufactures, which they exported upon camels in caravans, or large companies, and bartered with, or sold to, the neighbouring people. Being thus blessed with temperance, the smallest degree of affluence made them happy. They appear to have been naturally humane and hospitable ; and the dryness of their soil, and salubrity of their air, undoubtedly contributed to that quickness of apprehension, and strength of imagination, for which the *Arabs* have been always distinguished. They seem to have been rather laborious than industrious ; and to have toiled hard for a very scanty living, without applying to those arts which might have improved either the soil, or the genius, of their country. Their manners were simple and sincere, which made it the easier to practice upon their understanding. Fond by disposition of whatever was marvellous, they were excessively credulous, though some amongst them were possessed of sound judgments, as well as lively talents. They were void of ambition, and consequently not fond of enterprize ; though no people were, either by nature or habit, as afterwards appeared, better fitted for it. This, in a great measure, was owing to their excessive love of contemplation, poetry, and all kinds of ideal entertainments. Their figures of speech were frequently bold and beautiful ; even their common discourse was full of sentiment, and every man amongst them was naturally a poet. But those virtues were often carried into extremes ; for they were superstitious to the greatest degree. The men of learning amongst them seem to have been well versed in the history of the Old Testament, and the traditions of the Jews ; and they professed a regard for the Christian *Messiah*. But the truth is, that, divided as they were into numerous tribes or families, every sept had a religion peculiar to itself.

Of those septs, that from which *Mahomet* descended, which, from the most eminent of his ancestors, was sometimes called that of *Hassam*, was the most considerable, being princes of the *Koreish* ; for so the inhabitants of *Mecca* were denominated,
Abdallah,

Abdalla, the father of *Mahomet*, died young, and left his wife and infant son to the care of his father *Motalleb*. This venerable old man had many other children, who were all of them grown up, and made great figures in the state, while all the wealth of young *Mahomet* and his mother consisted of five camels and one *Ethiopian* slave. His education.

After what has been said of the natural turn of the *Arabs*, the reader will not be surprised, if their historians have been very liberal of the prodigies that attended the birth of their prophet, which, however, shall be omitted here, many of them being no other than a disguised collection of the like incidents from other authors, and even from the evangelists. Young *Mahomet* was sent to the desert to be nursed: While he was there, he had some fits of the falling sickness, which he and his followers afterwards pretended to have been a supernatural impulse; but his nurse *Halima* was so much frightened with the disease, that she carried the young prophet home to his mother *Amena*, with whom he lived till he was six years of age, in a town situated between *Mecca* and *Medina*, and there she died. Upon her death, young *Mahomet* was taken care of by his grandfather *Motalleb*, who appears to have discovered in him the seeds of future greatness. He treated his grandson with great affection during his own lifetime, and when he died, which happened in the 110th year of his age, two years after the death of *Anema*, he bequeathed the care of *Mahomet* to his eldest son *Abu Taleb*, who succeeded him in the principality, or rather chieftainship, of the *Koreish*. and pupilage.

Though *Abu Taleb* was a man, not only of great consequence, but of great understanding and virtue, yet it does not appear that he gave his nephew a very liberal education; for it is certain he could not write, or, at least, that he pretended he could not. As the practice of commerce in *Arabia* was common to their greatest princes, and carried on in a very simple, though laborious, manner, *Abu Taleb* instructed the young prophet in his own business, and was extremely careful of him.

The truth is, when *Mahomet* came to be about twelve or thirteen years of age, he discovered every symptom that could indicate his becoming, some time or other, a most extraordinary personage. To prodigious acuteness, and insinuating manners, were joined in him, a most beautiful face and person; and there was something so sublime in his conversation, that his uncle seems early to have laid the foundation of his future inspiration. For having occasion to go on a trading journey into *Syria*, he took the young prophet along with him, and introduced him to the acquaintance of a *Nestorian* monk, thought to be the famous *Sergius*, who lived in a monastery at *Bosra*, a city of *Syria Damascena*. Character of *Mahomet* in his youth.

It is to this day a secret in what manner the scheme of imposture was laid; but it is more than probable, that the contriver

The seal
of pro-
phesy.

He makes
his first
campaign
under his

Marries
Kadijah.

Reflection

of the whole was this *Nestorian* monk, called by his countrymen *Boheira*. It is still harder to say, with what views and motives so difficult and dangerous a scheme was planned and executed; but it is certain, that *Abu Taleb*, upon his return to *Mecca* with his nephew, pretended that the monk had discovered in *Mahomet* the seal of prophecy, which consisted in a kind of wen, or protuberance of flesh, growing between his shoulders; and that he had predicted his nephew's future mission by an impulse of divinity. *Mahomet*'s person and manners, which, as he grew up, became more and more beautiful and dignified, were well fitted to second those extraordinary pretensions; and the sincerity and candour he discovered in all his words and actions were such, as gained him, amongst his countrymen, the epithet of *the Faithful*. Between the fourteenth and the twentieth year of his age, he gave signal proofs of his courage and conduct in war, by a campaign which he made, under his uncle *Abu Taleb*, against the tribes of *Keran* and *Hawazan*, which terminated favourably for the *Koreish*.

Notwithstanding *Mahomet*'s occupations of war and commerce, it is probable he was still improving in the arts of imposture, and assisted in all his schemes by the artful monk.

But knowing under what disadvantages he lay, through the narrowness of his circumstances, he procured his uncle *Abu Taleb* to recommend him to *Khadijah*, a widow of great quality and fortune, as her factor, or steward of her estate. Some Christian writers pretend he was the keeper of her camels. Both might be true, the simple manners of the age and country admitting both duties to be discharged by the same person. Be this as it will, it is certain that *Mahomet*, by his address, care, and integrity, won the esteem of the noble widow, who likewise was of the tribe of *Koreish*, and she sent him to manage some affairs for her in *Syria*. Being now near twenty-five years of age, it can hardly be doubted but this journey was extremely agreeable to him, as it gave him a new opportunity of having an interview with *Boheira*, or *Sergius* the monk. This seems to be the more probable, as we perceive that during this journey he found means to make a proselyte of one *Maisara*, a fellow-servant of his own, who went with him into *Syria*, and who, upon his return to *Mecca*, swore to his mistress, that he saw her factor shaded from the rays of the sun by the wings of two angels, who hovered over him.

Perhaps there was no occasion for this miracle to influence a widow, past the bloom of life, in favour of one of the handsomest and most insinuating men in the world, who had daily opportunities of attending her. In fact, upon *Mahomet*'s return from *Syria*, she made him her third husband, (having been twice married before) when she was about forty years of age.

By

By this marriage *Mahomet* found himself in flourishing and *Mahomet* respectable circumstances, and was at leisure to meditate on rises in the the great designs he had in view. All authors who have world. wrote his history, or any thing concerning him or his religion, seem to have been either too favourable, or too severe, with regard to his character. Without some degree of real enthusiasm, and indeed self-conviction of his having a divine mission, it is next to impossible he could have conceived, and persevered under, the difficulties he had to encounter; for nothing at first could be more unpromising than his undertaking was. On the other hand, the many absurdities, the shiftings, and the incongruities, both of his doctrine and conduct, discovered the streights to which he was reduced, to keep it from detestation, and to disguise the palpable inconsistencies into which it ran him.

To save appearances, he thought upon the best, but perhaps the boldest, expedient that ever entered into the head of His dis- man, which was that of a gradual, or rather an occasional, courage- revelation. He was no stranger to his own constitution, ments and doctrine. which was remarkably voluptuous and sensual, especially with regard to women; and he afterwards said, That he could not execute the scheme he had in view without spilling an ocean of blood, and being guilty of the most shocking inhumanities. He likewise knew that no general system of religion or morality would be received amongst his countrymen, if the principles of it should maintain or authorize such practices, and therefore he very wisely resolved, that his doctrine, as orally delivered, should contain general professions of religion and virtue; but whenever he was reduced to the necessity of violating either, in a flagrant manner, he resolved to have a sentence, or chapter, delivered to him from God, to justify his action.

Thus, in fact, whatever may be said to the contrary, the The Ko- Koran, or the gospel of *Mahomet*, is no other than a collec- ran, what- tion of impious unintelligible scraps, heightened with the poetry so much in vogue amongst the *Arabs*, and sometimes, but seldom, interspersed with sentiments of true piety, or maxims of solid virtue. This is what authors of the most sensible learning, and true discernment, seem to be agreed in. Such writers of reputation as think most favourably of *Mahomet* are they who, by their intense application to his language and doctrine, have conceived an unreasonable, though natural, prepossession in favour of both. But no art nor learning can explain away, or recommend absurdities, that are obvious to any man even of common sense.

Mahomet, on the other hand, had infinite advantages from His ad- the situation of things when he begun his mission. The nu- vantages merous sects of religion amongst the *Arabs* themselves, the and en- degeneracy of the Christians, and the jargon of the Jews, courage- seem to have convinced *Mahomet*, and those who were in the ments, secret, that it was practicable to strike out a religion com- posed

posed of all three, but rendered palatable by dashing it with voluptuousness and sensuality ; and by this last expedient he chiefly succeeded ; for the doctrine of predestination, to which many attribute his success, is not peculiar to this impostor.

His pretended religion.

Islamism.

He converts his wife, her uncle, and others of great note and influence in the state.

He began his mission with the plausible pretext of restoring the religion of *Adam*, *Noah*, *Abraham*, *Moses*, and even the true religion of *Jesus* ; all which, he said, had been corrupted by their followers, and was founded in acknowledging the unity of God, and which he termed *Islamism*. This system seems to have been maturely digested by him ; for he was forty years of age before he began actually to put it into execution, and then, the better to effect it, he retired, with his wife *Khadijah* and his family, to a cave in Mount *Hara*, near *Mecca*. It appears that, before this time, he had retired several times to this cave ; but he now pretended to his wife, that the angel *Gabriel* had appeared to him, and informed him that he was appointed to be the apostle of God, with many other supernatural circumstances. *Khadijah* readily believed it, and swore, by him who had her soul in his hands, that he was destined to be the prophet of the *Arabian* nation ; and thus she became the first convert to Islamism. She immediately communicated her conversion to her uncle, or cousin, *Waraka*, who was by profession a Christian, but understood the *Hebrew*, and he came readily into her sentiments, with this addition, that *Mahomet's* vision had been foretold by *Moses*. *Waraka* being a man of great note at *Mecca*, encouraged *Mahomet* to proceed ; and he soon made a proselyte of his favourite servant *Zeid*, whom, upon his conversion, he manumitted or made free ; a practice that has ever since been observed by his followers. *Ali*, the son of his uncle *Abu Taleb*, was his next convert, though it appears he was not then above ten years of age ; and then he converted the famous *Abubeker*, a man of great weight, and his successor in the government. Their examples were followed by *Othman*, *Abu Obeida*, and other persons of chief credit and influence in the state, who embraced Islamism merely through the authority and the great opinion they had of *Abubeker*, who, for the important services he did to *Mahomet*, was afterwards dignified, by that impostor, with the appellation of the *faithful witness*.

He opens his mission to his tribe,

For some time these conversions were carried on in a cautious private manner, as *Mohamet* knew that his new doctrine was by no means agreeable to the bulk of his countrymen. At last, however, relying upon the vast credit and influence of *Abubeker*, and his other friends, *Mahomet* gave a general invitation, to a feast, to the numerous descendants of his grandfather *Motallib*, to whom he declared himself to be the prophet of God, demanding, at the same time, who amongst them was willing to become his wazir, or what we call vizier, which originally signified no other than a porter,

or

of a messenger, but is since become a word of great dignity. This declaration and question was not relished so well as he expected; for none accepted the offer of the vizirship but young *Ali*, who starting up, declared he would beat out the who ridi-
teeth, pluck out the eyes, rip open the bellies, and cut off cule him.
the legs of all who should dare to oppose the prophet of
God.

Thus impiously was this new mission manifested, and up- He makes
on the same bloody principles it has prevailed. *Mahomet Ali* his
embraced his new vizier, and adopted him for such; but vizier.
the rest of the company turned the whole into ridicule, and
jeered *Abu Taleb* as being now bound to obey his own son.
The reader is here to remark, that *Mahomet* in his act of
adoption, declared *Ali* to be not only his vizier, but his ka-
liph, or successor. That dignity, however, descended upon Original
Abubeker, *Omar*, and *Othman*, before it came to *Ali*, who un- of the dif-
questionably had the preferable right to it. This injury ference
done to *Ali* was resented by the *Persians*, after they came to between
be Mahometans, so warmly, that it produced an irrecon- the *Persi-*
cilable schism, which continues to this day between them ans and
and the *Turks*, who acknowledged the authority of *Abubeker Turks*.
and his two successors.

After this adoption, *Mahomet* commenced public preacher
in favour of his own mission. This seems to be the strongest *Mahomet*
proof we have that his brain was over-heated, and that he preaches.
was under a self-delusion; for though the novelty of the
thing brought many of his countrymen to hear him, yet
when he was incautious enough to upbraid them with infi-
delity, idolatry, and other crimes, he hazarded his life from He is in
their resentment, and he was saved only by the great power danger for
of his uncle *Abu Taleb*. This *Arabian* seems to have had the same,
too sound a judgment to follow his nephew implicitly, and
whatever prepossessions he might have for him in the begin-
ning, it is certain, that when he saw the unpromising state
of his mission, he would have persuaded him to have desisted.
But *Mahomet*, in the stile of a true *Arab*, declared he would His reso-
not desist, though his opponents should place the sun against lution.
him on his right hand, and the moon on his left. This de-
claration, joined to the wonderful perseverance of his inten-
tion, and the great affection which *Abu Thaleb* bore him,
operated so strongly upon the uncle, that he declared him-
self ready to defend him against all his enemies: but he
found this a matter of vast difficulty.

Mahomet, in all appearance of history, continued to be vi- His pre-
sited by frequent fits of the falling sickness, which he had tences un-
the art of improving to his own purposes, by pretending that der the
while he was under those fits, he was visited by the angel falling
Gabriel. We shall not detain, or rather nauseate, the reader sickness.
with a repetition of all the shocking extravagancies which
he acted and uttered to his followers upon such occasions.
It is sufficient to say, that *Mahomet* met with so much op-
position,

His despair.

and progress.

The great opposition he meets with.

His followers fly to Ethiopia,

position, that, in a fit of despair, he had some thoughts of putting an end to his own life, by throwing himself down a precipice; when he pretended that the angel *Gabriel*, whose person and dress he very particularly described, interposed, saluting him by the appellation of *the Apostle of God*. After this, he re-commenced the operations of his mission with more boldness than ever. He pretended himself now to be the plenipotentiary of Heaven, and that, as such, he had received full power from the Almighty; and he called upon every one to follow him in such a strain of authority and earnestness, that it became irresistible with many, who actually embraced his doctrine. Though his uncle *Abu Taleb* still continued to support him, as having the most tender affection for his person, which he saw to be in imminent danger from his enemies amongst the *Koreish*, yet he appears to have had very little faith in his nephew's connections with the divinity; for, according to the best accounts, he never openly professed his belief in him as the prophet of God. It is very possible, that in this *Abu Taleb* might be influenced, not only by his indifference towards such sort of revelations, but by political motives, since, by not declaring himself a sectary of his nephew, he retained the greater authority among the *Koreish*, and was the more enabled to do him service.

The spirit of the *Koreish*, however, against *Mahomet* seemed to grow in proportion to his success, and they came at last to a resolution to exterminate him and his followers. All this time, *Mahomet* was occasionally dictating verses, which were afterwards inserted in the Koran, and which he pretended to receive immediately from God, by the ministration of the angel *Gabriel*. His sect now became pretty numerous. They were denominated *Moslems*, called by Christian writers corruptly *Mausulmen*; and he had the art to adapt his effusions so happily to the genius and turn of his countrymen, that *Omer*, one of the most considerable men amongst the *Koreish*, became his convert. As to his own tribe, that of the *Hasbamites*, though they were in general far from countenancing his doctrine, yet they resented the attacks that were made upon his person; for *Abu Jahl*, a man of great family among the *Koreish*, having offered a gross insult to *Mahomet*, he was chastised for it by *Hamza*, the latter's uncle, who declared himself a Moslem. This brought on a kind of a civil war between *Abu Jahl's* family and the *Hasbamites*, which ended in favour of the latter. Notwithstanding this, the *Koreish* in general were so severe against *Mahomet's* followers, that, according to the Moslem authors, numbers of them fled to a neighbouring country, which they call *Ethiopia*, and which was governed by a *Najashi*, or king. It is certain, that about this time a very corrupted Christianity was professed by this prince and his subjects; and it is by no means improbable, that he might protect the Moslems, who were redemanded by their countrymen even with

with presents, but without success. Upon the return of the deputies to *Mecca*, the new reputation which Islamism acquired by being thus protected and favoured by a sovereign prince, increased the converts to it to such a degree, that the *Koreish* entered into a formal combination against the *Hasshemites*, in the name of God, and the instrument being duly executed, was deposited in their *Caaba*, or holy temple. *Mahomet*. This association, which was levelled against all *Hasshemites*, and even such as adhered to their old religion, created great commotions in the state. But, though *Abu Taleb*, who was at the head of the *Hasshemites*, continued to protect his nephew, yet the attacks upon *Mahomet*'s life were so frequent and so violent, both in public and private, that the prophet was obliged at last to abscond; and he retired with a few of his followers to the house of one *Orkam*, upon the hill of *Safa*, which was situated to such advantage, as to afford them a commodious shelter, at least for some time. *Mahomet* absconds.

In the mean while, the disputes between the *Hasshemites* and the *Koreish* raged more violently than ever, and all communication between them was cut off. About the fifth year after the association already mentioned had been lodged in the *Caaba*, a place whose sanctity was supposed sufficient to preserve it without the precaution of locks or bolts, *Mahomet* gave a signal instance of his address and cunning. For being again persecuted by the *Koreish*, he was obliged to fly to a castle belonging to his uncle *Abu Taleb*, where he was in a manner blockaded by his enemies. But he informed his uncle, that God had sent a worm, which had eat out every word of the association against him, excepting the name of God alone. He spoke this, as he well might, with so much confidence, that *Abu Taleb*, in a parley he had with the *Koreish*, offered to deliver his nephew up to them, if the thing did not appear to be true; but insisted, that if it should, the league should be declared void. The *Koreish* accepted the terms, and the fact appeared to be as *Mahomet* had represented it; upon which the association was annulled. Art of *Mahomet* to break the association against him

Though this miracle was certainly the effect of collusion, and, considering all circumstances, very easily performed; yet it gave a wonderful turn in favour of our prophet, and his followers now increased more than ever. But soon after he had the misfortune to lose the founder of his fortune, his generous uncle *Abu Taleb*. Some Moslem authors pretend he embraced Islamism before he died; but that seems to be doubtful. In the same year *Mahomet* lost his wife *Khadijah*, upon whose wealth he had risen to importance in the state, and who was one of the first and most sincere of his converts. Their deaths happened in the tenth year of *Mahomet*'s mission, answering to the year of Christ 619. *Abu Taleb* died in the eightieth year of his age, and *Khadija* in the sixty-fifth. His followers increase. Death of his uncle *Abu Taleb* and his wife *Khadijah*.

Insolence
of the *Ko-*
reish:

Weakness
of the
Greek and
Persian
empires.

Mahomet's
prophe-
cies.

He is
obliged
to retire.

About this time, the *Persians*, who, like the *Koreish*, were idolaters, had obtained some signal advantages over the Christians; which elated the *Koreish* so greatly, that it required more than *Mahomet's* effrontery to withstand them. He produced a new chapter of the Koran to prove that the *Persians* would soon, in their turn, be defeated; which was no difficult thing to foresee, their empire being torne to pieces by civil distractions, and a barbarous effeminacy prevailing in their country. The *Greeks* were, indeed, equally degenerated; but they had, at this time, at their head, the emperor *Heraclius*, a brave and an active prince, though without abilities sufficient to re-establish the national virtues of his subjects. In short, the whole empire of the East, the *Greek*, as well as the *Persian*, was so miserably degenerated, that it must have fallen a prey to the first invader. Neither is it too bold a conjecture in us to say, that, even from the first exercise of *Mahomet's* mission, he had been planning out the advantages which he afterwards reaped from so favourable a conjuncture. It could give neither satisfaction nor information to the reader to mention the various arts to which *Mahomet* was driven after the death of *Abu Taleb*, and of his wife *Khadijah*, to support his credit with his followers. It is here proper, however, once for all, to remark that our prophet was very frugal of his appeals to miracles; and the prophecies he uttered were so artful or so vague, that he was in no danger of any detection on that head. If any thing like a miracle was alledged in his favour, it had its rise from his followers, and rested entirely on their credit. The Moslem authors, however, pretend that when the infidel *Koreish* demanded a sign from the prophet, the moon was cloven in two, and half of it vanished: but we do not find, from ought preceding it, that this sign was either promised by *Mahomet*, or was any thing but an accidental interposition of a cloud between part of the moon and the earth.

The miracle, however, was of great use to *Mahomet* after it happened, and was honoured with a chapter in the Koran entitled, "the Moon." But that this miracle was no other than as we represent it, appears pretty plainly from the *Koreish* receiving so little satisfaction from it, that, after this, even some of the prophet's former friends joined with his enemies, and he was persecuted to so violent degree, that he was obliged to retire to a place called *Tayef*, about sixty miles from *Mecca*, attended by none but his favourite servant *Zeid*. He appears to have had some hopes of *Marud* and *Habib*, the heads of a considerable clan in those parts; but he was disappointed: and, though he made a few very inconsiderable converts, yet he was shunned by every person of note; and the mob and slaves, rising at last against him, turned him out of the town; so that he was obliged to go back to *Mecca*. Nor do we find that even *Abbas*, one of his uncles, who resided at

Tayef.

Tayef, interested himself in his favour, though that seems to have been the principal inducement of his retreat thither.

Upon *Mahomet*'s return to *Mecca*, we find him continuing his preaching against idolatry with the same vehemence as ever, but with less success amongst his countrymen. Some of the neighbouring tribes, however, were less prejudiced against him. They had come to *Mecca* in their pilgrimages to the *Caaba*; and many of the people of *Medina*, by the *Arabs* called *Yathreb*, listened to his doctrine; and some of them became his converts. This will appear the less surprising when we reflect that those converts, who were afterwards called *Ansars*, or Succourers, from the succour they gave the prophet, were deeply tinged with Judaism; and they were called *Jewish* tribes: but very possibly they knew little more of the *Jewish* dispensation than what just qualified them for becoming Moslems. Be that as it will, it is certain that our prophet, having communicated so much of the *Koran* as was then written, to the new converts, they were so well pleased with it, that they not only embraced his doctrine, but took an oath to persevere in his religion.

The great success he met with from this *Jewish* tribe, made our prophet endeavour to bring his system to a nearer conformity to the *Mosaic* dispensation; so that he found it necessary, for once, to lay aside the ministrations of the angel *Gabriel*, and, in imitation of *Moses*, on Mount *Sinai*, to converse with GOD face to face. This answered many purposes of imposture. It raised his importance amongst his real friends and believers, and gave weight and dignity to all that he should deliver thereafter: and this indeed appears to be the sheet-anchor of all his revelation. Though the notion was equally bold and impious, yet the execution exceeds every absurdity and extravagance that the wit of man ever devised or expressed. We are sorry, because of the important consequences attending this pretended expedition to Heaven, that we cannot dispense with giving the readers a few particulars of it.

He pretended, that, while he was lying in the open air, the angel *Gabriel* plucked out his heart; and, having wrung out of it the black drop or seed of original sin, filled it with wisdom and faith, and then restored it to its proper place. This, perhaps, is the least unsufferable of all our prophet's fictions, as it evidently has an allusion to the Christian doctrine of regeneration and a new creature. This operation being performed, the angel brought our prophet a most beautiful monster, composed of the parts of a horse, an ass, and a man, intitled the *Al Borack*, or the Lightning, which was to carry him to Heaven. *Borack*, however, who was endued with speech and reason, was very shy, notwithstanding all the authority of *Gabriel*, to suffer the prophet to get upon his back, till he promised to introduce him to paradise. He then mounted, and in the twinkling of an eye was carried to *Jerusalem*,

The cock
of *Mahomet's* hea-
ven.

rusalem, where, in the temple there, he was saluted by *Abraham*, *Moses*, and *Jesus*, and went to prayers with them. The prophet then left behind him *Borack*, and was by *Gabriel* conducted up a ladder to the first heaven, to which he got admittance, as being the friend of God. This heaven, according to him, was all of pure silver, and served as a kind of anti-chamber for angels who kept guard there against the devils, in stars that depended from the roof by golden massy chains. Here he likewise saw father *Adam*, who complimented him with his being the best of his sons and prophets. Amongst other angelical monsters which this heaven produced, our prophet speaks of a cock as white as snow, whose head touched the second heaven, though it was five hundred years journey distant from the first. This cock, which we may call the herald of heaven, is of great use in the *Mahometan* doctrine.

Throne of
God.

After this sample of our author's stages through heaven, we hope the reader will not expect that we are to be very minute in describing the rest of his journey. Till he comes to the seventh heaven; every step he advances, leads us to scenes of new extravagance and absurdity. All is gold, precious stones, insufferable light, and dazzling prospects. Through every heaven he passes, he meets some person, famous in holy writ, who acknowledges his mission; and even the angels are employed in bearing him testimony. Millions and millions of miles are passed by him and *Gabriel* in an instant; at last he reaches the seventh, where the throne of God stands, and where he had an interview with *Abraham* who treated him with great respect. From thence he was elevated to the lote tree, which is the utmost limit of heaven, and beyond which angels themselves cannot pass. The objects he saw, and the fruits that grew here, are said to have been beyond description or comprehension; and the tree itself stands on the right hand of the throne of God.

Reflection.

But, notwithstanding all the absurdities of this journey, it is extremely plain, that the wildness of the prophet's imagination was greatly aided by the works of certain Christian heretics, the Melalajans particularly, which were frequent in his time: and which makes it the more probable that some Christian apostate had a hand in the whole composition of this journey. It is likewise observable, that *Mahomet* tells us, that in the seventh heaven, according to some authors, he met with *Jesus Christ*, and recommended himself to his prayers; but some do not look upon this tradition to be orthodox. The angel *Gabriel* not being permitted to advance farther than the lote tree above-mentioned, the prophet proceeded by himself through many wonderful scenes, till, at last, he came within two bow lengths of God Almighty's own person; upon whose throne, he saw inscribed the famous sentence *There is no God but GOD, and Mahomet is his prophet*. The Divine Majesty, according to *Mahomet*, received him with

His inter-
view with
God.

grea

great familiarity, and fully instructed him in his will and worship. Retiring from the Divine Presence, he was again met by *Gabriel*, who conducted him back through the seven heavens to *Jerusalem*, where *Al Borack* waited for him, and re-conveyed him to *Mecca*. This light sketch of this wonderful journey is sufficient to give our reader some idea of the delusions of *Mahomet*, and the genius of a people which can swallow such absurdities. He is, however, to observe, that the relation of the journey is not written by *Mahomet* himself, but by some of his followers, and is become a part of the *Sonna*; which is a traditionary history of *Mahomet*, of equal authority with the *Koran* itself amongst his followers. Hereturns to Mecca.

Mean while, it appears that even the prophet himself was startled with the boldness of his fiction, and hinted to the angel *Gabriel* that he was afraid he would not be believed. But with difficulty the angel desired him to make a bold appeal, for the truth of all he advanced, to *Abubeker*, or the Faithful Witness. This was a lucky expedient. *Abubeker* was devoted to enthusiasm to *Mahomet*, and was proud of the honour done to him by the angel. When the prophet at first recounted this celestial expedition to some of his nearest relations, and some of his most devoted followers, they began with great reason to suspect his brain was touched; and advised him, by all means, not to publish to the *Koreish* such palpable absurdities. Their apprehensions of his being mad were redoubled, when he told the whole affair to *Abujah*, one of his most determined enemies, who made it a handle for a fresh persecution against him and his followers, many of whom deserted him upon this occasion. He is believed

But *Mahomet* knew mankind and his countrymen too well to be discouraged at this. He knew that, though a few cautious, luke-warm, adherents might grow cool upon such a string of absurdities, yet that others, whose imaginations were more warm, and whose minds were more credulous, would not only stick by him but would redouble their attachment to his person and his mission. This was not reasoning by the event; it is what has ever been seen in all cases of imposture and enthusiasm; when, the bolder and more extravagant the fictions grew, the more the followers of the new sect increased. *Abubeker* was not wanting to interpose upon this occasion. *Mahomet*, in the hearing of all his followers, applied to him; and he averred the truth of the whole upon the opinion he had of the prophet's veracity. This confident testimony of a man so respectable as *Abubeker* was, for power, wisdom, and integrity, but, above all, for holiness and purity of life, had a wonderful effect upon the new converts in favour of their prophet. He saw his interest strengthened by being now composed of none but those whose faith in him increased in proportion to his presumption and assurance. He knew that since they could digest the absurdities of his Conjectures upon *Mahomet's* conduct.

coelestial expeditions, all future absurdities must become palatable to them, and that he was now in no danger of their ever boggling again: for such is the nature of credulity and enthusiasm.

Reasons of his success This was the criterion of *Mahomet's* success as a prophet; and a bold experiment it was, but demonstrative of his profound knowledge of the human mind. The reader is here to reflect, that tho' the apprehensions of the *Arabs* were very acute, yet they were, in general, not endowed with reasoning powers, and the warmth of their imagination injured the soundness of their judgment. Such is the character of the nation, and even of the learned amongst them; though some exceptions there may be, as there are amongst all people. The credulity of those misinformed *Arabs* was, perhaps, in this case, no greater than that of the bulk of the most polished people of antiquity, the *Greeks* and the *Romans*.

His visit to Heaven allegorical But, least the reader should be startled at the men of sense and judgment amongst the *Arabs* (for such there were) believing those absurdities; it is proper to inform him, that most of them, (who, by the bye, are not very numerous, and are not esteemed very orthodox) resolve the whole into an allegory, and reconcile it to belief by saying that the prophet saw every thing by the eye of faith alone, and that all is to be understood in a mystic sense.

Strength of his party. The success of *Mahomet* upon this occasion, as has been hinted, did not consist so much in enlarging the number, as in confirming the faith, of his converts; and he strengthened the whole by occasional passages of the *Koran*, which he produced from the mouth of God. The *Koreish*, in general, as well as his followers, had their favourite extravagancies in religion, and were therefore equally wedded to them; and an adherence to the new or old absurdities was merely accidental, according to every one's complexion or constitution. The old, upon this occasion, were in danger of swallowing up the new; when an incident happened of the most favourable nature to our prophet.

He is resorted to by the *An-sars* from *Mecca*. Though it was with great difficulty and danger that he could obtain honour in his own country, or amongst his own kindred, yet he became to be in high reputation at *Medina*, where, as has been observed, he had already made some converts. These looked upon him in the light of a persecuted prophet, on account of the opposition he met with from the *Koreish*; and some of them resorted again to *Mecca*, where they entered into deeper engagements than ever with the prophet; for they took an oath that they would renounce idolatry of every kind; that they never would whore, steal, nor murder their children, as had been their common practice when they judged their families to be over-stocked; nor be guilty of uttering falsehoods. All this was extremely laudable and meritorious, and so agreeable to the lights of nature and reason,

reason, that the new converts thought themselves safe in adding to their oath, that they should pay an implicit obedience to the prophet, who promised them paradise, and threatened them with hell, according as they observed or broke their oath. The number who took this oath were twelve, and all of them from *Medina*; and *Mahomet*, to confirm them in their allegiance, sent *Massoub*, one of his trusty disciples, to reside with them at *Medina*. His great success with them.

The zeal and activity of this missionary, with the interest of the new converts, soon did wonders; and there was scarcely in *Medina* a family of note where they did not gain proselytes. This happened during the twelfth year of *Mahomet's* mission. He sends an apostle to *Medina*. The great points of practice recommended by *Massoub*, when he initiated his converts, were, ablution; the purifying themselves by two garments, repeating the words, *There is no God but God, and Mahomet is his apostle*: which they were given to understand was the confession of their faith; and the saying their prayers with two bendings of their bodies.

While the affairs of *Mahomet* were thus prosperous, and he was daily making new converts at *Medina*, he was so hard pressed by his enemies at *Mecca*, that he found his life daily in danger. His uncle *Al Abbas* could not be persuaded to become his proselyte, but he became his protector, and did him all the service in his power. New converts swear to propagate his doctrine. In the thirteenth year of his mission, his reputation was so well established among his followers at *Medina*, that about seventy-two men, and two women, with some unbelievers, invited by curiosity, came, with *Massoub* at their head, to submit certain differences that had arisen amongst them to the prophet. These being soon adjusted, the converts, understanding how dangerous it was for *Mahomet* to remain at *Mecca*, offered him a retreat at *Medina*, promising to defend him against all his enemies. Nothing could be more opportune for *Mahomet* than this offer; but his uncle *Al Abbas*, who was present, insisted upon the *Ansars* swearing that they were sincere, and would neither abandon nor betray him: which oath they took, and most punctually observed; *Mahomet*, at the same time, promising them paradise as the reward of their faith.

Hitherto our prophet's religion, however fantastical it may appear, was far from being diabolical. It seemed to partake more of the Christian, than of any other system; and those parts of the Koran which were promulgated before this time, remarkably recommended forbearance and patience to his followers under their persecutions and afflictions. The impostor went farther; for, in imitation of *Jesus Christ*, he chose twelve men out of the *Ansars*, to whom he gave some powers that our Saviour did to his apostles; and he stiled himself the great apostle of his people; to which they assented. He imitates *Jesus Christ*, and

binds his
followers
strongly
to him.

But whether the natural temper of the apostle was exasperated by opposition and danger, or whether he saw it impossible to establish a religion that wanted uniformity, and consequently truth, by the means of persuasion and forbearance, it is certain that he no sooner saw the appearance of a power to back him than he altered his pacific system. He obliged his followers, according to the Moslem authors nearest his time, to enter into a treaty with him, offensive and defensive, against all who should oppose him, or the propagation of his doctrine; and to confirm it with an oath. From this oath we may date the diabolical part of Mahometanism.

An associ-
ation
against
him in
Mecca.

This association, which we may well suppose took up some time in forming, soon came to the ears of *Mahomet's* enemies amongst the *Koreish*; and they endeavoured to counter-act it by one on their part, by which they resolved that the prophet should be assassinated by one man out of every one of their tribes, or septs, which were very numerous, and altogether greatly more powerful than the *Hashemites*; and that every man should strike him with his sword. This resolution, after some debate, (for milder methods were proposed), being agreed to, it was not long before *Mahomet* knew of it by his spies. Though there is no express authority for it, yet there is reason to believe, from the whole tenor of his conduct upon this occasion, that he had not for some time appeared in public; nor durst he venture to leave the place but in company with the *Ansars*, whom he had dismissed some time before to prepare matters for his reception.

Reflecti-
ons upon
the pre-
tended
miracles
attending
him.

The reader, perhaps, need not be informed that this impostor had a most wonderful faculty of engrafting a miracle, or some revelation, upon the slightest accident, and most natural occurrence. When the *Koreish* associated against him, the devil, in the shape of an old man, was the most forward in the council. He could not go from *Mecca* without leave from the angel *Gabriel*; and that angel appeared to him the moment when he ought to depart. To those engraftments, and the facility with which he composed the detached pieces of the Koran, which justified all his measures, he, in a great degree owed his success; though, when stripped of them, we meet with little or nothing more in his life, than what great quickness, courage and judgment, joined to an unbounded ambition, might have effected.

He escapes
by strata-
gem from
Mecca,

It was the beginning of the night when *Mahomet* took his flight from *Mecca*, after ordering his faithful *Ali* to perse-
nate him, by wrapping himself up in his green cloak, and
lying down to sleep, so as to be seen by his assassins, who,
he knew, would be curious enough to peep through a crevice
for that purpose. This stratagem succeeded, and gained *Ma-
homet* time for escaping to *Abubeker's* house. But, if we are
to believe him and the Koran, not without a miracle or two;
for

for meeting with some of the conspirators, he was obliged to throw some dust (of what kind may be easily conceived) into their eyes, and to blind them. In the mean while, the conspirators, who, it seems, wanted either strength or authority to force open the doors of *Mahomet's* house, watched him till the morning, when, *Ali* appearing, they found they had been imposed upon.

Abubeker, in the greatest dejection of spirit, received the prophet, and resolved to be the companion of his flight; which seems before-hand to have been well considered and concerted. It is more than probable that *Mahomet* had intelligence that, should he go to *Medina* by the ordinary road, he would be overtaken or intercepted by his enemies; he therefore resolved, if possible, to elude their vigilance, and to retire to a cave that lay about four miles south of *Mecca*, called *Thur*, which had before-hand been plentifully stored by *Abubeker's* orders, with provisions; and his daughter *Asama* was informed of the place of rendezvous, to which she frequently repaired.

Every thing in this narrative, when stripped of the *Moslem* marvellous, will appear extremely natural and probable to the learned reader who is acquainted with the temperate manners of the *Arabs*, and how easy it was for so cunning an impostor as *Mahomet* to heighten the most common occurrences into a miracle; but he soon had occasion for all his craft. *Abubeker* and he continued in the cave of *Thur* for three days; but the *Koreish* understanding where they had taken refuge, sent one *Soraka*, at the head of a party, to take *Mahomet*. His retreat to the cave of *Thur* was fertile of many miracles. He enjoyed frequent conversations with the angel *Gabriel*; and a pidgeon, which had laid two eggs at the mouth of the cave where he was concealed, diverted the pursuit of his enemies after him on account of the loneliness of the place. This is all the foundation I can procure for the Christian writers having devoted the pigeon to be the bird of *Mahomet*. We are likewise told that a spider's web, which, as it were, curtained the entry into the cave, made his enemies despair of finding him in so solitary a place. It appears, however, that *Mahomet*, and his friend *Abubeker*, did not think themselves safe in the cave, but set out on their flight to *Medina*. They were overtaken by *Soraka* at the head of his party; but his horse stumbled as he was about to seize *Mahomet*. This, though a very common occurrence, was interpreted by *Soraka* as being somewhat portentous; he therefore entreated the prophet's prayers; but still continuing the pursuit, his horse again stumbled: upon which, being no longer miracle-proof, he returned to *Mecca*, and *Mahomet* arrived safe at *Koba*, a village about two miles north-west of *Medina*, and there laid the foundation of a mosque, which he called The Temple of Piety.

Though

Though nothing can be more childish than the miracles recorded of this impostor, yet it is wonderful how greatly his fame spread, especially as his fortune now wore the face of persecution. While he remained at *Koba*, all the *Banu Saham*, or tribe of *Saham*, with *Boreida* at its head, amounting in the whole to seventy persons, became his proselytes, as did a famous religion-hunter, one *Salman*, a *Persian*, whose father was governor of *Hispahan*. Those conversions undoubtedly raised the prophet's fame wonderfully in *Medina*; for we are told, that, when he entered that city, which he did early in the morning, five hundred of the inhabitants went out to meet him; and his landlord, *Abu Ayub*, carried his baggage before him on his shoulders. There was now no resisting his fortune. His private circumstances were opulent, and he built himself a house. Three days after his arrival at *Medina*, his faithful *Ali* waited upon him, and every day now raised him fresh proselytes. He is, however, by some, accused of having defrauded two orphans of the ground upon which he built his house; while others vindicate him by observing, that the same was given to him as a present by the proprietors. His entry into *Medina* is, by the *Moslem* writers, fixed to the sixteenth of *March*, called by them the first *Rabi*; and from that day the famous æra of the *Hejra*, or his flight from *Mecca*, commences. The *Moslem* authors, however, are themselves divided as to the precise day on which this date began; for some have fixed it to the sixteenth of *July*; but all agree that it happened in the year of *Christ* 1622.

Mahomet's situation at *Medina* was extremely favourable to his views. The inhabitants of that city and neighbourhood, tho' superstitious in the greatest degree, scarcely knew what religion was. Some were *Jews*, some idolaters, and many of them, worse than either, professed a degenerated, disguised, Christianity. *Mahomet* found converts in every sect; and the plausibility of his doctrine, which terminated in the simple worship of the true God, gained him proselytes even amongst men of sense and learning. His followers, at this time, were divided into two parties; the *Mohajerin* and the *Ansars*. The former were they who had, on his account, removed from *Mecca* to *Medina*. The latter, who called themselves helpers, or auxiliaries, were they who received him at *Medina*. Each had their several merits to plead with the prophet, and he now consolidated them into one body under the strictest ties of friendship and affinity.

His next care was, in the second year of the *Hejra*, to settle the *Kebla*, by ordering his followers always, in praying, to turn towards the east. It appears that he had, before this, directed them always to turn their heads to the temple at *Jerusalem*; and his alteration, in this respect, gave so much offence that a great many of his followers fell off from him. The

The compliment he paid to the temple was undoubtedly meant to reconcile the *Jews* to his doctrine ; but their stubbornness probably disgusted him.

He next instituted the fast of *Ramadan* ; an institution which still takes place in his religion. This fast, though whimsical by its strictness, is perhaps well founded in true principles of society ; as it begins in *September*, or the *Arabian Ramadan*, and is equally conducive to the health of the professors as to the preservation of the young brood of eatable animals. It is, however, uncertain whether some such fast was not usual amongst the *Arabs* before the days of *Mahomet*, who very possibly instituted it in imitation of the Christian *Lent*.

The compliance of *Mahomet's* followers to his dictates, made him look upon himself as not only the founder of a new sect, but as the father of a new people. This character gave him some thoughts of independency ; but that independency could only be supported by rapine. He therefore sent his uncle *Hamza*, at the head of thirty horse, to surprize a caravan, belonging to the *Koreish*, coming from *Syria* to *Mecca*. *Hamza's* strength was unequal to this undertaking, and he was obliged to abandon it. He continued, however, his depredations upon the *Koreish* during all the second year of the *Hejra* ; and *Obejdah* was his chief officer.

The advantages he gained over the *Koreish* were but trifling, but of great importance to the infancy of his government. They were such as enabled him to form the face of an army consisting of three hundred and thirteen men, with which he determined to attack a rich caravan which was escorted by *Abu Sofian*, a *Meccan* nobleman, who, having intelligence of *Mahomet's* design, sent for a detachment of nine hundred and fifty of his countrymen to support him. Before the junction could be performed, *Mahomet* attacked the detachment at *Bedr*, and entirely routed it.

This victory was unexpected, and was greatly owing to the enthusiasm with which *Mahomet* inspired his troops by pretended revelations from the angel *Gabriel*. *Abu Jahl*, who commanded the detachment, was killed on the spot, as were ninety of his followers ; and the victory, in fact, inconsiderable as it was, gave rise to *Mahomet's* greatness. The Moslems, however, as they are called, were disappointed of their chief aim ; for *Abu Sofian*, and the chief officers, escaped in safety to *Mecca*.

Notwithstanding this, the field of *Bedr* afforded spoil sufficient to create some differences in *Mahomet's* army, which were quashed entirely by his authority.

Amongst the prisoners was *Al Abbas*, our prophet's uncle, who, having his nephew no longer under his protection, had taken up arms for his country.

Though there was nothing very extraordinary in this victory, yet *Mahomet* took care to be assisted in it by three thousand *Mahomet's* affection.
sand

Division
of the
plunder.

Mahomet's
cruelty.

His ex-
cursions.

Arabian
epithets.

land angels in celestial panoply, with *Gabriel* at their head. This fiction gained him credit, and the caravan afforded him wealth; though great part of it was saved and carried into *Mecca* by the good conduct of *Sofian*. This victory cost *Mahomet* no more than fourteen men: but all his authority was scarcely sufficient for preventing the true nature of the plunderers he commanded, from breaking very disagreeably out when the booty came to be divided. The *Mohagarims* and the *Anfars*, the old and the young, quarrelled about it; till *Mahomet*, having recourse to his old expedition of revelation and the *Koran*, divided the spoil equally amongst them all, reserving a fifth for the service of GOD; that is, the use of the prophet and his family, the orphans, the poor, and travellers. This distribution was settled as a precedent ever after amongst the Moslems, excepting when the prophet found it for his interest or conveniency to break into it.

Mahomet made a mean and an inhuman use of his victory; for he ordered the heads of some men of great quality at *Mecca* to be struck off merely because they had insulted him in the ministry of his mission when he was there. His advocates pretend that this severity was necessary for establishing a belief of the divinity of his legation, and was according to the practice of the antient *Jews*: but, without entering into any discussion upon this head, it is certain nothing can excuse its barbarity. After the battle, *Mahomet* met with some family distresses in the death of a daughter and a son: but the fame of his gaining the battle of *Bedr* against such superiority of numbers, made him respected by all the neighbouring tribes and states, and particularly by the emperor of *Ethiopia*, who, according to some Moslem authors, but without much appearance of truth, was converted to Islamism.

After this, *Mahomet* made several marauding excursions, in which he carried off the cattle of the neighbouring tribes, whose uncouth names and designations are handed down by Moslem authors, but are immaterial to a reader who searches for the truths more than the toys of history. It appears in those excursions that he seldom was at the head of more than two hundred men; that horses were very scarce amongst his troops; that they were sometimes obliged to supply their room with camels; and, that, amongst others, he put to flight his antagonist *Sofian*, who had sworn never to use women or perfumes till he was revenged of the prophet.

I am, once for all, to inform my reader, that one of the greatest excellences of the language and genius of the *Arabs*, is, their always catching, like *Homer*, and the author of the book of *Job*, who probably was an *Arab*, at the most striking circumstances of every object, and making that its characteristic. Thus, in the encounter with *Sofian*, the Moslems made a considerable booty in meal; and therefore it is called, The War of the Meal.

Abubeker,

Abubeker, amongst other appellations, was termed, The Father of the Girl, or Virgin, because *Ayesha*, the only maid *Mahomet* seems to have espoused, was his daughter. The reader, in every page of the Moslem authors, meets with instances of this kind.

Mention has been already made of the *Jewish* tribes in *Arabia*, and especially in *Medina*, where they were so considerable, that, in the first year of the *Hejra*, *Mahomet* entered into a treaty with them, which confirmed them in their privileges and in the free exercise of their religion. But this good understanding did not long continue. A Moslem killed a *Jew*, in the street of *Medina*, on pretext of his having offered some indecency to an *Arab* woman. The *Jews* resented the death of their brother, and cut in pieces the Moslem. *Mahomet* made this a pretext for depriving them of the advantage stipulated by the late treaty, unless they became his converts. Upon this the *Jews* flew to arms, and refused the condition, which, even according to the Moslem relations, was both unjust and arbitrary. *Mahomet* punishes the *Jews*.

Hej. 3.

This gave the impostor a pretext for making war upon them, and he drove them out of the field into their forts and fortresses; where he blocked them up so closely that they were obliged to lay down their arms and submit to his mercy. Had it not been for a pagan *Arab* of great distinction in *Medina*, one *Abdallah*, the tyrant would have butchered them all in cold blood; and he had given orders for that purpose: but, upon *Abdallah*'s intercession, the *Jews*, who were seven hundred in number, were obliged to submit to perpetual banishment upon their giving up all their arms and riches, which were very considerable.

The amorous complexion of the impostor was of great use to him in establishing his authority. He has, in his *Koran*, limited the highest number of wives any man can enjoy to four; and even those, in many cases, with great restrictions: but this self-denying ordinance was not to extend to our prophet; who always reconciled his love to his ambition, by making them subservient one to the other. He had already married the daughter of *Abubeker*, and now he married *Hafsa*, the daughter of his other great support *Omar*, and with her received a very considerable fortune. He had already given to *Ali*, his cousin-german, his own daughter *Fatema* in marriage, and she is greatly praised by the Moslem writers. His marriages.

Love and poetry formed the great business of an *Arab*'s life when he was not in the field; and their women have, for their shape and beauty, been famous in all ages. The Moslem writers are very lavish in the praises of *Mahomet*'s wives, and have painted them all as having been endowed with extraordinary accomplishments both of body and mind, and all of them extremely happy in sharing in the prophet's embraces, though

though *Aysba* is said to have been his best beloved. It is here proper to inform the reader, that the ladies of *Arabia* attended their husbands and their lovers to the field, where they fought, in the hottest dangers, with as much intrepidity and execution, as the bravest of the men ; and we shall find, in the course of this history, many battles that were gained by their valour and conduct. But this warlike disposition in the females of *Arabia* was not peculiar to the days of *Mahomet*.

Hej. 3. *Mahomet* at this time can be considered in no other light than that of a public robber. The veneration his followers had for him kept them profoundly devoted to his will, and he never was without a band of desperate ruffians ready to execute his rapacious bloody commands. He knew that, notwithstanding all his successes, he was greatly hated by the pagan *Arabs*, who were still very numerous and very powerful at *Medina* ; and therefore, excepting in cases of the utmost necessity, he seldom chose to stir from that city. All the neighbouring country, however, was scoured by his parties on horseback, who plundered all they came up with, and sent their spoils on the backs of camels to *Medina*, where the impostor resided with a good garrison. *Zeid*, at this time, seems to have been his chief partizan. The *Koreish* of *Mecca*, taking warning from the loss they had sustained at *Bedr*, ordered their caravan, which was this year remarkably rich, to take a different rout from that of *Bedr* ; but this coming to the knowledge of *Zeid*, he came up with the caravan at *Alkarda*, in the province of *Naid*, with no fewer than five hundred horse, and after defeating the escort, which was commanded by *Sofian*, he made himself master of the whole, which amounted to an immense booty, the fifth of which was reserved by *Mahomet*, and was worth twenty-five thousand dahrems, or pieces of silver.

He is at-
tacked by
the *Koreish* Though none of the Moslem or other writers have directly observed it, yet it appears pretty plain, that the impostor's disfurnishing himself of cavalry had at this time almost proved the ruin of his affairs ; for, during their absence, the *Koreish* at *Medina* formed an army of no fewer than three thousand men, of whom seven hundred were armed with coats of mail, and two hundred were horse, and marched to attack *Mahomet* at *Medina*, where he was at the head of not above one thousand men ; but amongst them all it is remarkable, he had but two horses. Having called together a council of war, he gave it as his own opinion, that they ought to remain in *Medina*, probably expecting to be relieved by *Zeid*. But he was over persuaded by his officers to march out and fight the enemy ; he therefore put his army in motion. It consisted of three divisions led on under three standards, that of the tribe of *Aws*, that of the tribe of *Casry*, and the third of *Mohajarin*. The two former were all of them *Anfars*, or proselytes of *Medina* ; the latter

latter were Moslem *Meccans*, while he himself marched with his grand standard carried before him.

It may in this place be necessary to endeavour to give the reader some notion of the manner in which the *Arabs* of those days fought. For many ages before the time of *Mahomet*, they seem to have had no warlike character, their wars being confined to the inroads of one tribe or clan upon another, and revenging family disputes; and the loss, on the greatest of such occasions, seldom exceeded a few scores of men. A scymetar and a lance formed the armour of their common soldiers, and the *Arabs* in general seem to have been very expert in the use of both. Some of them were armed with bows and arrows, and these were accounted the flower of their troops, being armed at the same time with the lance and the scymetar: nor must it be forgotten that many of them had slings. A cuirass of leather, fortified with steel, or brass, protected the head, shoulders, and breast of many, and some wore shirts of mail, which lay close to their bodies, and was formed of an infinite number of small scales of metal, strung upon one another, and the whole as it were quilted between two skins, and sometimes between two pieces of linen. The *Europeans* afterwards borrowed the fashion of those shirts from the *Arabs*, and that scale kind of armour is often to be seen upon the seals of the first *Norman* kings of *England*. By the best accounts, the *Arabs* in general were of a spare make of body, lean, but big boned, and muscular; and so great was their bodily strength, especially in their arms, that it was common for them to strike off a head, and sometimes to divide a body, by a single blow with a scymetar. Upon the whole, therefore, we are not to look upon the small effusion of blood, which, before this time, generally happened in their conflicts, to have been owing either to their cowardice, their want of discipline, or the weakness of their arms; but to the implacability of one tribe towards another; the very mention of their descent from a common parent, or of an intermarriage, when opportunely thrown out, being often sufficient to appease their most dreadful animosities.

After *Mahomet* left *Medina*, he marched with his army four miles to the north, and took post between that and a village called *Ohod*, where he formed his line of battle, placing fifty archers, whom he considered as the prime of his army, in his rear, with orders by no means to stir from thence.

But the impostor at that time, perhaps, was ignorant that the enemy's right wing was commanded by one of the greatest generals of that or any other age. This was the famous *Caled Ebn al Wallid*, whom in the sequel we shall call *Caled*. Their left was commanded by *Acrema*, and the centre by *Sofian*, who had some time before been surprized by *Zeid*. Their Disposition of the battle.

Their body of reserve was led up by *Henda*, *Sofian's* wife, who, with fifteen other matrons, animated their troops with music, and exhorted them to revenge their countrymen who were killed at *Bedr*.

Mahomet, at the same time, by his effusions, gave his troops such a spirit, that they attacked their enemy with irresistible fury, and drove their centre upon their body of reserve, after losing their great standard, the bearer of which was killed by *Hamza*, *Mahomet's* uncle. This disheartened the *Meccans*, whose troops being composed of several tribes, who were not all equally good, so greatly, that notwithstanding all the efforts of the ladies, who upbraided the cowardice of those who commanded the centre, they were upon the point of falling into a total rout, when the fortune of the day was changed in their favour by the courage and conduct of *Caled*.

Mahomet
defeated.

Mahomet observing the superiority of the enemy's numbers, and that *Caled* commanded the cavalry upon their right, apprehensive of being attacked in the flank, had very properly placed his archers in the rear, that they might gall the *Meccan* cavalry with their arrows. But the temptation of plunder was in those days irresistible by an *Arab*. *Mahomet's* archers seeing the enemy's centre give way, and the field in disorder, immediately detached themselves from their post, in hopes of plundering the baggage of the *Meccans*, notwithstanding all that their leader could do to prevent them. The left flank of *Mahomet's* army becoming thus exposed, was so opportunely attacked by *Caled*, that *Mahomet* was obliged to fly in person to support his troops. He did all a brave general could do, but all to no purpose; for he found his men put into such disorder by *Caled's* charge, that it was impossible to rally them: he, however, opposed himself to the enemy, attended only by a few friends, but received several contusions and wounds from stones and arrows, and he had certainly been killed, had it not been for *Abubeker's* nephew, who shielded him after he was knocked down to the ground, and had two of his fore-teeth beaten out. By this time, *Mahomet's* standard-bearer being killed, the person who killed him, and *Caled*, proclaimed aloud that *Mahomet* was slain; and this relaxing the ardor of the *Meccans*, gave an opportunity for *Abubeker*, *Omar*, and *Othman*, to rally a body of the Moslems, and penetrate to the place where they found *Mahomet* still fighting, but ready to sink under his enemies, but they brought him safe off.

But the *Koreish* do fell, as did seventy of the Moslems; but no more than twenty-two of the *Koreish* were killed. Though *Mahomet* and all his best officers were wounded, yet they carried so good a countenance in their retreat, that the *Koreish* did not think proper to pursue their victory. The truth is, it appears upon

upon the face of the narrative of this encounter, that *Mahomet's* death was the great object the *Koreish* had in view and that upon the report of it they had drawn off their troops towards *Mecca*, and the main body had advanced some miles in their march, when advice was brought of the impostor's being alive. The *Koreish*, upon this intelligence held a council of war, some of them moved that they should return, and exterminate the *Moslem* army. But the ardor of the *Koreish* was now abated; each recriminated upon the oversights that had been committed, and tho' some of them, seemed determined and resolute to march back, yet the general advice was for returning to *Mecca*, which they accordingly did. Tho' nothing is more easily accounted for, than all this, yet when the prophet heard of their marching forward to *Mecca*, he invented a miracle to account for their march, as if God had struck their army with a sudden consternation. But setting aside his prophet-craft, we must do him justice as a man and a general, to say that upon this occasion he behaved as both, and that with great courage and spirit. For understanding that his enemies were about to return, he animated his men, and marched to face them; nor did he return to *Medina* till they resumed their march to *Mecca*.

By a strange impulse not uncommon to the human mind *Mahomet* in the end reaped greater advantage, by being thus defeated, than he could have obtained by the most compleat victory. At first, indeed the common people, especially such of them as had lost friends or relations in the late encounter, expressed great signs of uneasiness, and many of them did not scruple to say, that had he been divinely commissioned, he could not have met with such a defeat. But *Mahomet* was far from extenuating his loss; he exerted his cares in burying and praying for the dead, and publicly accused his followers, as being by their secret or open sins, the cause of all his and their own misfortunes. It was he said, for the living alone, that he mourned, because the dead fallen in defence of their religion were gone to paradise, and that the days of man being numbered, and his death marked, it was impossible for any man to know his fate, tho' nothing was more certain, than that paradise was immediately open to those, who died for his faith.

So plausible a doctrine, delivered with all those embellishments which *Mahomet* knew so well how to give it, stilled all murmurs; nothing was now to be heard of but repentance and reformation of life, and every *Moslem*, was impatient for an opportunity of conquering the enemies of his faith, or sealing it with his own blood. Thus, as we have already hinted, the authority of *Mahomet* was confirmed by his late defeat.

Amongst the many instances of our prophet's inhumanity, we must not forget, that he employed the most desperate, that is, the most enthusiastic of his followers in acts of assassination. One *Ashref* a Jew, who had the courage to preach, even in *Medina*, against *Mahomet*, was murdered by one of those

Mahomet's
artifice
and address

The advantages
he received by the same

His assassinations

private assassins, as was, about the same time, the head of a tribe called the *Hodheilite*, by another whom *Mahomet* in the *Arabs* stile surnamed “a man fit for any undertaking.” It appeared that this *Hodheilite Chieftain* was making preparations against the impostor, and *Mahomet* was so well pleased with his murder, that when the assassin informed him of it, he made him a present of the cane he had in his hand, which coming from a prophet, was more valued by the receiver than the largest sum of money would have been; for, we are told that the murderer ever after carried it in his hand, and had it buried along with him in the grave.

His truce
with the
Koreish.

But *Mahomet's* defeat at *Ohad* was favourable to him, in more respects than that already mentioned. The prodigious resolution with which he and his army behaved against superior numbers, struck his enemies with terror, and his retiring alive from the field of battle with so inconsiderable a loss, filled them with divisions and suspicions of each other. In short *Sofian* after his return to *Mecca*, where he seems at this time to have been the ruling man, was obliged to address him for a truce, which the impostor had his own reasons for agreeing to. He seems however on some occasions, to have been too open to vanity. For some of the *Arab* tribes who hated him, finding him proof against open force, sent him messengers, pretending that they wanted to be instructed in his faith, upon which he ordered six missionaries to go along with the messengers, who murdered four of them upon the road, and sold two others of them to the *Koreish*, who put them to death. Seventy other missionaries whom, at the same time, he sent to the province of *Naid*, were put to the sword by *Amer*, the prince of that country, to whom *Mahomet* sent a letter for his conversion.

Hej. 4th

He at-
tempts to
assassinate
Sofian

Thus, it is plain that some of the tribes, and many of them men of the greatest importance amongst the *Arabs*, were irreconcilable to *Mahomet's* person and doctrine, but were overawed by his power from openly attacking him. The impostor attributed the opposition he met with to *Sofian*, and sent a murderer to assassinate him. But *Mahomet* began now to be so well known, that *Sofian* was upon his guard, and escaped the dagger.

He pu-
nishes the
Jews

The *Jews* in the neighbourhood of *Mecca*, were still eye-sores to the impostor; and indeed they seem to have been an ignorant, faithless, and cowardly sort of people. One of their tribes called *Nadir*, who had sided with *Mahomet* or his enemies, according as fortune appeared favourable, or unfavourable, was by him attacked in their fortrefs about three miles from *Medina*, and obliged to capitulate, and to evacuate the whole territory of *Medina*; leaving their effects behind them, which being very considerable were distributed amongst the *Mohajarin*, towards whom the prophet seems to have indulged a general partiality.

It was now the fourth year of the *Hejra*, and the followers of *Mahomet* being greatly enriched by their successes, and ex-
peditions,

peditions, began to lose their sobriety of manners in inebriating liquors, and a spirit of gaming. The practice of both had already created some disorders amongst them, and *Mahomet* too well knew the consequence, not to be alarmed if it went farther. An implicit obedience amongst his disciples to his will, and a perfect unanimity amongst all his followers, were the main foundations of all his hopes. Inebriating and gaming liquors, and chance games, were destructive of both; and it was necessary to prevent them. It happened luckily for *Mahomet*; that the prohibition of wine, and strong liquors, was no new thing among the *Arabs*; so that when he produced, as he did in every interesting circumstance of his life, a passage of the *Coran*, entirely forbidding it to his followers, it was received as a renewal of their ancient institutions; nor indeed do we meet with any opposition he encountered on this important occasion. By it, the obedience of his followers was secured to him; their abstemious course of life was preserved, their health of body and vigour of mind were consulted, and they were rendered less liable to those pleasures, that often make mankind the most desirous of living. As to the other prohibition, that of chance games, we know of no difficulty it met with. The wisdom of both will be sufficiently evident, when we see the unexampled discipline, intrepidity, and abstinence, which attended the followers of this prophet, when they subdued the two greatest empires then in the world, those of *Greece* and *Persia*. We must not, however, leave this subject, without observing, that many of the *Moslem* doctors, some of whom are now in reputation amongst themselves, did not conceive that this prohibition of strong liquors was to be taken in an absolutely literal sense. They thought that the prohibition of the abuse of them only was intended. This, however, seems to have been the interpretation of latter times, for it received no sanction from the prophet himself; who knew too well how apt mankind are to abuse any arbitrary or discretionary interpretations of a positive law.

Forbids
the use of
wine,

and gam-
ing;

wisdom of
the pro-
hibition.

While this great point was settling, *Mahomet* advanced at the head of seven hundred men against some of the *Arab* tribes, who had not submitted to his doctrine, but they fled with so much precipitation at his approach, that the place where he came up with them was denominated by his followers, the *Place of infatuation*. To erase his late disgrace at *Obod*, he marched to *Beda*; where for eight days he offered battle to the *Koreish* under *Saffian*, who thought proper to decline the challenge, which *Mahomet* had, as usual, imputed to their being struck with terror, by the hand of God. After this, towards the fifth year of the *Hejra*, he marched with a thousand of his troops against a body of wild *Arabs*, who lived on the borders of *Syria*; and who, after the example of his own followers, plundered and massacred all the strangers and caravans who travelled those roads.

His far-
ther pro-
gress,

Hej. 5.

and con-
quests.

Arriving at their principal town, they abandoned it; and he made booty of all their cattle, and every thing that was valuable, there, or in its neighbourhood. After this, he returned, laden with spoils, and attended by the acclamations of all his followers, to *Medina*, where he reposed himself after the fatigues of his campaign.

A strong
confede-
racy form-
ed by the
Koreish
against
him.

Notwithstanding all the representations, and insinuations, of the *Moslem* historians, *Soffian*, the *Meccan* general, appears to have been a man of great civil and military abilities, perhaps superior even to those of *Mahomet*. But we are here to observe, that he lay under great disadvantages. Many of the *Koreish*, seeing the successes of *Mahomet*, began to entertain favourable sentiments of his mission, so that he could not form out of them a body sufficient to subdue the impostor. He was therefore obliged to form a confederacy against him, out of the other *Arab* tribes; and was so successful, that this year he raised twelve thousand men (a prodigious army in those parts, and at that time) with an intention to give at once the finishing stroke to the power of *Mahomet*. But those tribes, when brought together, were no other than a disjointed body, and agreed scarcely in any thing, but in their hatred of *Mahomet*. They advanced, however, with an intention to besiege and take *Medina*.

His artful
conduct.

The prophet must have now seen an end of all his hopes and designs, had it not been for his admirable address, in sowing, by means of his missionaries, the seeds of emulation, suspicion, and dissention, amongst his enemies, which, as we shall soon see, operated to his expectation.

The war
of the
Ditch.

Upon the approach of the confederates, under *Soffian*, *Mahomet*, was advised by *Salman*, the person who has been already mentioned, to draw a line round the city of *Medina*, (which the *Moslem* authors call a ditch) and to encamp with his forces, which amounted to about three thousand, within that line. This advice was masterly, and the prophet followed it: the confederates saw the difficulties of forcing the line, and that if they should even succeed, the prophet had a ready retreat to the city, which they must besiege, before they could compass their design. When they came to the *Moslem* lines, they found they could not be attacked, without great disadvantages on their part, and they spent almost a month before them, without doing any thing of consequence. In the mean while, the assailants were attacked by a bitter east-wind, which benumbed their limbs, tore up the sandy deserts around them, while *Mahomet's* troops had the advantage of the shelter of the city. All this while *Mahomet* was plying his secret arts, by his emissaries, amongst the heads of the confederates; and encouraging his own men by pretended miracles in their favour. A single combat likewise happened, upon a challenge given by one of the heads of the *Koreish*, which was accepted of by *Ali*, who

His ene-

who killed his antagonist and his second. At last, the confederates, practised upon by the arts of *Mahomet*, abandoned the expedition, which is called "The war of the ditch," struck their tents, and directed their march homewards.

Mahomet was too wise to pursue them. He held a kind of triumph in *Medina*, where he gave a refreshment to his troops, but that was of a short continuance. He had lost no more than six men in the war of the ditch, and therefore was enabled to go instantly against the *Koreidites*, an Arab tribe; against whom he had a particular spight, for their infidelity and inconstancy. He succeeded in his expedition, and laid siege to the fortress of the *Koreidites*, which contained about seven hundred of that nation, besides their wives and children. After about a month's siege, or blockade, the besieged, who had no opinion of *Mahomet's* mercy, surrendered to *Saad*, the chieftain of the *Aws*, their old friends. It was the misfortune of the besieged, that *Saad*, who had been wounded during the war of the ditch, in which the *Koreidites* had been very active, was their inveterate enemy, and his sentence was, that all the men (who were upwards of six hundred) should be cut in pieces, the women and children made slaves, and that all their plunder should be divided amongst the *Moslems*. The impostor approved of the sentence, as being that of God, and it was inhumanly put in execution upon the spot.

We forbear to tire the reader with frequent repetitions of the various revelations *Mahomet* pretended to have received, enjoining and justifying all those diabolical barbarities. Every incident, however shocking, had a verse, a passage, or a chapter of the *Coran* to justify it, and all was swallowed by the prophet's deluded followers.

His amorous complexion seemed to be improved by his successes. He kept *Rihana*, the most beautiful of all the captives, or, in other words, he forced her to submit to his embraces. Nor were the daggers of his murderers unemployed, for at this time they assassinated *Salam*, a Jew of great eminence, who had incurred the prophet's displeasure. The facts here mentioned are so shocking, that we should have omitted the mention of them, could we have done it with any justice to the truth of history. But they rest upon the faith of authors the most favourable to *Mahomet*, and of his own religion, and some of them almost cotemporary with him. Many of them to be found in the *Sonna* itself; and some of them not obscurely hinted at even in the *Coran*. It is true the divine mission and commands are urged in justification of all that happened; but this pretext is so stale, and so ridiculous, that we shall spend no time in refuting it.

Could any instance be wanting to compleat the detestable character of our prophet at this period, it must be his marriage with *Zenobia*, called by the *Arabs* *Zenolia*, the wife of

his favourite servant *Zeid*. *Zeid* was of an illustrious parentage, but had in his childhood been carried off prisoner, by some *Arabs*, and, at last, was reduced to be a servant to *Mahomet*, who was so kind to him, that when *Zeid*'s father, understanding that he was at *Mecca*, came to ransom him, he chose to stay with his master. This pleased *Mahomet* so well, that he formally adopted *Zeid* his son and heir, in case (it is to be understood) he had no son of his own; and, in the mean time, he gave him this *Zenobia* for his wife. Her charms improving greatly after her marriage, she perceived on a certain occasion, that the prophet was smitten with them, and she imparted her apprehensions to her husband. Nothing can give us a stronger idea of the fear and veneration, in which the prophet was held by his followers, than what happened on this occasion. *Zeid*, though fond of his wife as she was of him, thought it equally impious and dangerous to live with her, after the prophet had given her an intimation of his affection. Terror and enthusiasm proved, both in the husband and the wife, too strong for love and duty. It was not enough for *Zeid* to resign his wife without murmuring, for he must give the prophet a plausible pretence for taking her to his bed. He therefore feigned an aversion for her, and proceeded even so far as to acquaint the prophet with it. *Mahomet*, though he well knew *Zeid*'s intention, seemed to receive the intimation not only with indifference, but dislike; but at last, a seasonable revelation from heaven interposing, he agreed that the parties should be divorced; and, when a proper time came, he married *Zenobia*, to the great joy of her husband, and the wedding was celebrated with extraordinary pomp and magnificence. Some of the prophet's most sensible followers were indeed scandalized at this avowed breach of his own laws, but all was salved by his declaring, that it was the divine pleasure he should be exempted from all the dispensations to which other men were subjected.

He sub-
dues the
Arab
tribes.

After this flagrant act of hypocrisy, injustice, and adultery, our prophet subdued the tribe of *Kaleb*, and took its chieftain, *Themama*, prisoner, who declaring himself a *Moslem*, was dismissed by the prophet, and he served against the *Korish* with such zeal and success, that, by cutting off their provisions, he reduced them to such distress, that they were obliged to apply to the prophet himself for relief. It appears that *Mahomet* had always a warm side for the *Meccans* in general, and never despaired of, one day, reigning over them. He ordered *Themama* to desist from his depredations upon his people, as he called them, and to let their convoys pass unmolested, which he accordingly did. *Mahomet* was not so fortunate with regard to another *Arab* tribe, that of *Labian*, which he marched against, and wanted to surprise, but they were upon their guard; and he was obliged, after making a feint towards *Mecca*, to return to *Medina*. He succeeded

succeeded better against the tribes of *Jatfan* and *Kaid*, who had driven away some of his camels, which he retook in person, at the head of five hundred men, and he returned to *Medina* with a great booty, after having plundered and laid waste the country. After this, the smallest detachments the impostor sent out against his neighbours, struck terror into their largest numbers, and forty of his followers were sufficient to make three or four hundred of the inhabitants fly. He was particularly well supplied with intelligence of all the rich caravans, with commodities, or money, that were carried to any part of *Arabia*, or its neighbourhood; and, this year, he plundered caravans and persons of vast sums of money and quantities of goods. In short, *Medina* became now to be the mart of all *Arabia*, and was rich in money and the most valuable commodities in the east; notwithstanding this, the robberies, the plunder, and the murders committed by the impostor and his followers, but above all the detestable assassinations he had been guilty of, struck his countrymen with horror, so that he had very little intercourse with any but the poorest and most desperate tribes; and his riches lay in some measure useless upon his hands at *Medina*. and gets great riches.

The prophet, to get the better of those prejudices, and at the same time to enrich his followers, whom he now thought of reducing under a settled government; and at the same time to give him a great figure in the eyes of the world, sent one of his principal domestics, called *Dohya*, to the emperor *Heraclius*, at *Constantinople*, desiring leave for the *Moslems* to trade with the imperial subjects, and at the same time inviting the emperor to embrace *Islamism*. Presumptuous as those demands were, the first was granted; the latter was not rejected, at least not with contempt; for the emperor desired time to consider of the proposal. He invites the *Greek* emperor to turn *Moslems*, and to open a trade with him.

This acquiescence of the *Greek* emperor, the greatest prince then in the world, towards a little *Arabian* robber, will not be surprising to the reader, who considers the great successes of *Mahomet*, the terror with which he had filled both *Arabia* and *Syria*; his confident, and most extraordinary pretences to inspiration, and the magnified reports of him, spread about by his countrymen, who, of all people in the world were the most addicted to exaggerate, and to run into the marvellous.

We are now to consider the prophet, as a petty prince of a dominion which he had acquired by his impostures, his courage, his rapines, and his cruelties. The most favourable construction that can be put upon the latter, is, that it was necessary for his executing the plan of his mission. But how wicked must that man be who lays down a plan, which is subject to that necessity? *Mahomet*, however, according to the most favourable accounts of him, had cruelty, rather than clemency, predominant in his nature; and he had

Hej. 6.

His farther cruelty.

His plan of government.

His gratitude:

instance of it.

lived long enough to see that he must lose more by it than he could gain. He this year arrived at such a pitch of reputation, that all the *Arabs* who either had no religion, or were indifferent about any, which was the case of great numbers of them, made their court to him, by either embracing, or pretending to embrace, *Islamism*; which was always found to be a sure passport to the prophet's favour. Eight of them, who, it seems, were not very sincere in their profession, were ordered by the prophet to one of his farms, to be cured of a disorder they laboured under, by drinking the milk and the urine of his camels; but they requited his kindness, by murdering his shepherd, and driving away his cattle. The prophet, however, sent a party immediately after them, who brought them back in chains to *Medina*, where he crucified them, after ordering their eyes to be bored out with a red-hot iron, and their hands and their feet to be cut off.

It was about this time, that he seems to have formed that capital principle which his followers have always so invariably followed, of obliging those whom they subdued, or attempted to subdue, either to embrace *Islamism*, or to pay tribute. The former flattered the impostor's ruling passion, the latter gratified his avarice. It is remarkable, that, at this time, he had greater success amongst the *Jews* and *Christians* than amongst the *Pagans*; for this obvious reason, that a well-principled *Pagan* was a more rational being than either a *Jew* or a *Christian*, according to the exercise of their religions in that age and country. Among the other converts to his missionaries, was *Asbag*, the *Calbite*, a *Christian* prince, or chieftain; great part of his subjects followed his example, and they who chose the exercise of their own religion, paid a tribute, and quietly enjoyed it. The daughter of *Asbag* was married to an eminent *Moslem*, and was the mother of *Abdallah al Asgar*, a doctor of high rank in the *Mahometan* law.

If *Mahomet* had any thing that looked like virtue in his nature, it was gratitude. He was constant in his friendship towards *Ababeker*, *Omer*, *Ali*, and the other *Moslems*, who had been so very instrumental in his advancement; and he was even grateful, when he met with a generous action, even in an enemy, or those who were indifferent to him: For as *Dohia*, his steward, was returning from executing his commission at *Constantinople*, he was set upon by an *Arab* prince, *Honeid*, and his son, and plundered. Another set of the *Arabs* obliged *Honeid* to refund his booty, and *Dohia* proceeded to *Medina*, after having met with extraordinary civilities from the *Rafaites*, another clan of *Arabs*. *Mahomet*, understanding what *Honeid* had done, sent out a strong party against him, who defeated his troops, killed him and his son, and were carrying the wives and children of the clan, with all their cattle, away to captivity. But upon the intercession of the *Rafaites*, *Mahomet* ordered all the captives to

to be restored to their liberty and effects. Soon after, he subdued the tribe of *Saad* and carried off their camels and flocks, for having formed an alliance with his enemies, the *Jews* of *Kaibar*; he next advanced in person, attended by his favourite wife *Ayesha*, and *Salma*, another of his wives, against the tribe of *Mustalek* which was commanded by *Hareth*, a prince of some distinction in those parts. *Hareth* having got his troops together, offered *Mahomet* battle, but was killed before the engagement. Though it does not appear that there was any inequality of numbers between the two armies, yet the angel *Gabriel*, dressed all in white, and mounted on a bay horse, fought at the head of the *Moslems*, which so intimidated the enemy, that they surrendered at discretion. What the fate of those who were found in arms might have been, is hard to say, had not a lucky accident for them interposed. For *Hareth*, the deceased prince of *Mostalek*, happened to be father to *Jeweira*, a lady of exquisite beauty, who being amongst the captives, was purchased by *Mahomet*, over whom she got so great an ascendancy, that he not only married her, but took her tribe into his particular protection and favour, and released a hundred of the principal *Mostalekite* chiefs.

It is highly unreasonable to suppose the prophet's inconstancy, not to have had a very disagreeable effect upon *Ayesha*, to whom he had always professed the highest affection, and that it was not attended with a very disagreeable abatement in his manner of expressing it. A beautiful young female *Arab*, may be well supposed to resent this in more shapes than one. Be this as it will, during this expedition *Ayesha* was missing for a whole night out of the prophet's camp, and, next day, about noon, came to it, very much fatigued, attended by *Safwan*, a *Moslem* captain, and riding upon his camel. The most considerable of the prophet's friends, jealous of his honour, immediately accused her of adultery, and it must be owned, with no small appearance of justice. The defence which *Ayesha* made, that having occasion to alight upon the road, and to step a little way aside, as she was remounting the box upon the back of her camel, she perceived she had dropt a necklace of great value, and that going back to look for it, her camel drivers, who imagined she was on the box, had proceeded without her; and that being fatigued, and wandering, she had laid herself down on the ground, where she fell asleep, till she was awakened by *Safwan*, who conducted her home upon his camel.

This story appeared, as indeed it was, to be extremely improbable to the prophet's warm friends, who persisted in accusing the lady of incontinency. This was a charge that not only affected *Ayesha*, but *Mahomet*, very sensibly. For though, perhaps, he was conscious of the provocation he had given her, and would have been glad that all mention of the affair had been dropt, yet he could not manage the indiscretion

and address.

tion of his friends ; and the lady persisting in her vindication, exasperated them still more. The prophet therefore, to save the discredit of infidelity to his bed, was obliged to have recourse to his usual, and never-failing expedient, that of a revelation from heaven ; clearing the honour of his wife ; and for that purpose produced the twenty-fourth chapter of the *Coran*, by which all her accusers were covered with shame, and a stop was put to all further calumny, one of them being severely whipt, by *Mahomet's* orders, for his indiscretion.

He visits the *Koreish*,

All this while, *Mahomet* was unable to do any thing against the *Koreish* at *Mecca*, the possession of which was the great object of his ambition, as it must render him very formidable over all *Arabia*, and make him master of the *Caaba* ; whereby the seal of divine approbation was to have been put to his mission. At first he purposed to reduce *Mecca* by force, and sent messages to the most powerful of his confederated, or tributary, clans, to attend him for that purpose. But they disliked the expedition so much, that they desired to be excused, and none marched to his assistance. *Mahomet*, upon this, altered his scheme, and advanced in a peaceable manner, but attended with some troops, to *Hodeibiya*, the suburb of *Mecca*, where the *Koreish* stood ready to dispute his entrance, which *Mahomet* seems to have been in no condition to have forced. As his professions, however, were pacific, a treaty was entered into, and his son-in-law *Ali*, who acted as his secretary, was ordered to draw up the terms. In wording them, he stiled *Mahomet* the apostle of God, which *Sobail*, one of the deputies for *Mecca*, objected to, and *Mahomet*, for very wise and politic reasons of his own, gave up the title, and was simply denominated *Mahomet* the son of *Abdalla*, to the great disgust of his *Moslem* friends. The terms of the treaty, however, were at last engrossed, and it contained a truce for ten years, during which time both parties were at liberty to strengthen themselves with what allies they thought proper ; and *Mahomet* was to have leave, next year, to visit the temple of *Mecca*, or *Caaba*, for three days.

and concludes a treaty with them.

He returns to *Medina*.

However the *Moslem* authors may represent this expedition, it seems pretty plain that *Mahomet* missed his aim, which was, in fact, to make himself master of *Mecca* ; and all his troops took a solemn oath of fealty and obedience to him, should he attack that city, to which he afterwards found himself unequal. Upon his return to *Medina*, he sent his servant *Zeid* to invest the castle of a lady, called *Forka*, whose subjects had attacked some of his plundering parties. *Zeid* took the castle by assault, and putting part of the garrison to the sword, he made the others prisoners. *Forka* herself, who was immensely rich, was cruelly put to death, and a beautiful young daughter she had, with all her money and effects, was carried off by the conqueror. The tribe of

Zeid puts to death *Forka*.

Gatfar

Gaifan next felt the edge of the prophet's sword, and *Zeid* extended his excursions as far as the borders of the *Red Sea*, to *Median*, from whence he brought to *Medina* a great booty, and a vast number of prisoners, who were sold into slavery.

It is incredible, in what veneration the prophet, at this Great time, was held by his followers, even to their catching his hair and the parings of his nails, drinking the water he made of his foot, and licking up his spittle. *Mahomet* made a pompous display of all this, before the *Koreish*, and other deputies, his people, who resorted to his camp, and the *Arabs* in general, even those who were his greatest enemies, began to think there must be something extraordinary about a person, who, from so small a beginning, had become so powerful, and was so much venerated. We have already taken some notice of the prophet's vanity; and this year it influenced him so much, that he sent a formal invitation to several sovereign princes, particularly to *Kofru Parviz*, then king of *Persia*, to embrace his religion. *Kofru*, who had himself very little, at first did not seem averse to the proposition, but observing the insolent strain of *Mahomet's* letter, he lost all patience, and tore it to pieces. A conspiracy about this time had been formed, to assassinate *Kofru*, of which it is more than probable, the prophet, on account of the numerous assassins he employed, was acquainted, and upon *Kofru's* sending an insolent message to him, by *Badhan* king of *Yaman*, *Mahomet*, probably that he might be more ripe in his intelligence, required till next day to give his answer; when, pretending to have had an interview with the angel *Gabriel*, he told the messenger that *Kofru* was slain. This proving true, *Badhan*, looking upon it as a proof of the prophet's divine correspondence, became a proselyte to *Mahometism*; which endeared him so much to the prophet, that he was afterwards continued in the government of *Yaman*. According to some *Moslem* authors, *Mahomet* made about this time another attempt to convert the emperor *Heraclius*, who received his letters with great respect, sent back the messenger with large presents, and would actually have turned *Mahometan*, had he not been afraid of losing his crown. Whatever may be in this, it is certain, that he applied about the same time to *Makakas*, the prince of the *Copts*, and governor of *Egypt*, under the emperor *Heraclius*. *Mahomet's* letters, which were now signed with a seal, with the inscription, "*Mahomet the apostle of God*;" being delivered to *Makakas*, he received them with the utmost veneration from the hands of *Hateb*, *Mahomet's* envoy, and dismissed the messenger, with a present of some valuable jewels, and of two beautiful *Coptic* girls, for the prophet's own use; one of whom, called *Mary* the *Copt*, became afterwards his favourite concubine. The reader, however, will observe, that though he did not actually succeed in his application upon this occasion, yet a

Mahomet
foretels
Kofru's
death;

His em-
bassy to
Egypt,

good understanding between him and the *Egyptian* prince was of great conveniency to both. This *Egyptian* was little better than a rebel to the emperor *Heraclius*, upon whom he had, in a manner rendered himself independent, and by whom he every day expected to be attacked.

and to
Ethiopia.

Mahomet sent the like invitation to *Ashama*, king of *Ethiopia*; who likewise received the messenger and his letters with the most profound marks of veneration, but we have no certain accounts that his compliance with the invitation went any farther. *Hareth*, the king of *Gassan*, was next applied to by the prophet, to the same purpose, but it appears from the *Moslem* writers, that he received the invitation with so much contempt, that he was cursed by *Mahomet*. The king of *Yamama* by profession a *Christian*, treated his application much in the same manner. This prince is said to have once had favourable sentiments of *Islamism*, and even to have embraced it: but to have reverted to *Christianity*; and, him too, *Mahomet* cursed. But he had better success with *Mondar*, the king of the *Barein*, who readily embraced *Mahometanism*, and his example was followed by his subjects.

His expedition
against
Kiabar.

Notwithstanding all the advantages the impostures of our prophet had gained, he thought himself far from obtaining his ends. The richest and most understanding *Jews* in general were his enemies; and foreseeing that he aimed at their utter destruction, they had fortified themselves at *Kaibar*, a city of great antiquity, not far from *Medina*; and not only strong in itself, but thought to be impregnable by means of certain forts which they had erected around it. *Mahomet*, to inspire his followers with a greater detestation of the *Jewish* race, pretended that he had been bewitched by *Lobeid*, a *Jew*, and his daughter, by means of certain knots which they had tied upon a rope (a common method of divination amongst the ancients) and which his good friend the angel *Gabriel* taught him how to unloose, by which he was delivered from the forcery. At the same time the prophet promised to indemnify his troops for their being disappointed of the spoils of *Mecca*, by those of *Kaibar*, which were immensely rich; and he confirmed the whole of his exhortations, by a ready passage of the *Koran*, which came down from heaven for that very purpose.

The *Moslems* unanimously called out to be led against *Kaibar*, which they were with so much expedition, that the *Jews* there had no intelligence of their motions, till the *Moslem* army appeared before the place, and in a very short time took *Naem*, one of the castles which defended it, with little or no loss.

Nothing in the history of *Mahomet* is more unaccountable than the engines which he made use of in carrying on his sieges. The *Arabs* were very little acquainted with the powers of mechanism, and all we can understand is, that they

they made use of an engine, somewhat like the battering-ram of the *Romans*. But as that engine was of itself very simple, and required the support of many others to render it effectual, of which the *Arabs* seemed to have had no knowledge, their successes in besieging places must in general have been owing to their own invincible resolution, and perseverance. Be this as it will, they sat down before the citadel of *Kiabar*, where *Mahomet* met with many repulses; and was often in danger of losing his life. After he had made a breach in the walls, by his battering rams, he still was beaten off, by the resolution of *Kenana*, who by way of eminence was termed the king of the *Jews*, and who commanded in the place, where the whole wealth of the besieged, which was immense, was deposited. In short, it appears that the prophet, by his frequent repulses, began to despair of carrying the citadel, and thought of returning home, when he was re-inspired by *Abubeker*, *Ali*, and *Omar*.

Nothing was impregnable to the courage of men like them. *Al Camus*, the strongest of the forts, was defended by *Marhab*, a man resembling the ancient giants of *Palestine*, in bulk and strength; and he, more than once, drove the besiegers off with great loss, after they had mounted the breaches. Even *Abubeker*, who distinguished himself greatly on this occasion, could not withstand him. But *Ali*, impelled by a torrent of enthusiasm, attacked, conquered, and killed him, by cleaving his head in two with a sword that had been presented him by the prophet. *Al Camus* made but little resistance after this, and *Mahomet* making himself master of it, found it immensely rich. Great part of the treasure however was buried, and concealed; and *Kenana*, rather than discover it, underwent exquisite tortures. We are told, that when *Al Camus* was taken, the prophet narrowly escaped being poisoned by *Zeinab*, the sister of *Marhab*, and that though he survived the *Persian* for three years, it was at last the cause of his death. Amongst the other spoils taken in *Al Camus*, was the beautiful *Safiya*, whom the prophet made his wife. The other forts about *Kaibar* did not hold long and takes, out. They surrendered, one after another, to the terror of the impostor's name; he found, however, great difficulty in supporting his army, the *Jews* having ruined all the country round; but his invincible resolution got the better of all difficulties, and *Kaibar* at last was obliged to capitulate, which it did upon very disadvantageous terms, the inhabitants being obliged to submit to be disposed of as the conqueror pleased; but suffered to enjoy their properties in common with the *Moslems*.

Fadac, and *Wadil Kora*, after this, opened their gates to the conqueror. These were two towns belonging to the *Jews*, other in which he found likewise great riches. About this time, some of his disciples, who had been obliged to fly to *Ethiopia*, rejoined

rejoined him, to his great satisfaction, and he espoused by proxy *Itabiba* the daughter of his great enemy *Sophian*, who it seems had likewise fled to *Ethiopia*, where the *Najashi* or king married her by proxy to the prophet.

His impi-
ous prac-
tices.

The conquest of *Kaibar*, raised the prophet to a pitch of greatness far beyond what he ever had known, and rendered him very formidable to all his neighbours. *Yetama* a city of considerable consequence submitted to him, as did the tribes of *Hawan*, *Kelob*, *Morrah*, *Awal* and others. His generals made an incursion into the kingdom of *Yaman*, which they ravaged; and his fame was so great that the king of *Gassan* turned *Mahometan*; tho' we are told he afterwards reverted to christianity. Nothing was now too absurd or too impious, for him not to practise, for he found means to resolve the most gross enormities into a revelation from heaven. Tho' fornication was strictly prohibited by his own law, yet he was guilty of it with *Mary* the *Copt* in defiance of all his engagements with his wives. They found means, however, notwithstanding all his sanctity, to make him very uneasy, and the great power and authority of their parents and relations obliged him, at last, to behave with more decency towards them. But every thing containing the most palpable contradictions, and the most shocking impieties, was carried on by direct revelations thro' the angel *Gabriel*.

He visits
the *Caaba*

The possession of *Mecca*, as has been already observed, had always been the prophets great object; and this year, by his late treaty with the *Koreish*, he was intitled to visit the *Caaba*. This he performed with a string of ceremonies, too foppish and immaterial, to be repeated here, tho' it appears that he was held in such detestation by the *Meccans*, that when he visited their city, they retired to the mountains; a very few of them remaining, thro' curiosity, to observe the prophets procession. Having resided four days at *Mecca*, he retired to a place called *Shorf*, where he consummated a new marriage with *Maimuna*, a handsome widow.

Hej. 8.
His great
successes
continue.

But notwithstanding, all the absurdities, inconsistencies, and inhumanities of the prophet's life and practice, he still prospered; and his success was considered by many as the seal of his divinity. The great *Kaled* who had defeated him at the battle of *Ohod*, became now his convert, as did *Omar* and *Othman*. These were men of the greatest power, influence and courage amongst all the *Koreish*. But were we to investigate the causes of their conversion, we might perhaps find that it arose from motives equally interesting and enthusiastical. *Mahomet* it is plain had now arrived to a pitch of power, that promised him the empire of all *Arabia*; and therefore, in point of interest, those great men found their account in becoming his proselytes. At the same time, the prodigious zeal, fidelity, and courage, with which they afterwards devoted themselves to his

his doctrine, could not be counterfeited, and must have been sincere.

In proportion; as the prophet's power advanced, so did the His pul-
professions of his sanctity and mission. He now ordered a pits.
pulpit of a peculiar form to be constructed, from which he
declaimed, and which was long preserved by his successors
in the government. He continued to be the scourge of all the
neighbouring tribes, and ravaged many places, the names of
which are not known; tho' particularly described by *Moslem*
authors. The tribes of *Malab* and *Morrah*, were chastised,
the neighbouring country was ravaged, and *Medina* continued
to be the repository of all the wealth in that part of the
world. The prophet, however, was not without meeting with
some checks. One of his generals, *Caab*, in an incursion he
made, had all his men cut in pieces, and one of *Mahomet's*
ambassadors, who had been sent to convert the governor of
Bosra was assassinated by *Amzru* the governor of *Muta* in *Syria*,
under the emperor *Heraclius*. His em-
bassador
assassinat-
ed.

This assassination affected the prophet's honour and repu-
tation. He was now become a powerful prince, and he order-
ed his servant *Zeid* to take the field at the head of three thou-
sand men, and to advance to *Muta*, near which the imperial The bat-
generals, (if we may credit the *Moslem* authors,) were at the tle of *Mu-*
head of one hundred thousand men. Those numbers are *ta*
perhaps exaggerated, but the truth is, the degeneracy of the
Greek empire at this time was such that no advantage against
superiority of numbers is incredible. *Zeid* finding such a dis-
parity between his own troops and that of the enemy, made
a Halt; and sent to *Mahomet* for a reinforcement, but
the imperial army advancing rendered a battle inevitable.
Zeid accordingly carrying in his hand the great standard of *Isa-*
nism, attacked the imperialists, and was killed as were *Iaafa*
and *Abd'allah*, who succeeded him in the command, which
next devolved upon the celebrated *Kaled*, who restored the
fortune of the day, and defeated the imperialists with great
slaughter. When the account of this victory was given to
Mahomet, he dignified *Kaled* with the emphatical title of one
of the swords of God. The *Moslem* authors, think that this
victory, decisive as it was, was dearly purchased, by the death
of the great men who fell upon *Mahomet's* side. The tribe of
the *Kodaites* a plundering race, were next subdued, by *Maho-*
met's generals; and the *Koreish*, seeming disposed to violate
their truce with him, he sent *Obeidah*, toward the seacoasts to
to observe their motions. In this expedition, we are told, won by
the *Mos-*
lems, but
dearly
purcha-
sed.
that *Obeidah's* troops were reduced to live upon the leaves of
trees, and must have perished of the distemper, which that
food brought upon them, had it not been for a very large fish,
which was thrown a shore, and which they eat off to their
great satisfaction and recovery.

But

Mahomet
marches
against
Mecca.

But the time was now come, when *Mahomet* was to strike his decisive blow, by attempting the conquest of *Mecca*. Some of the *Koreish*, had been incautious enough to violate the truce, and *Sophian* who still had the chief command in *Mecca*, had endeavoured to make up the breach. But *Mahomet* seeing the conjuncture favourable for him, rejected all terms of accommodation and even refused to see *Sophian*, who had taken a journey to *Medina* for that purpose. This refusal, which seems to have been a concerted measure, amongst all their *Moslem* chiefs, was followed by warlike preparations, for the reduction of *Mecca*. Many of *Mahomet's* followers were natives of that place, and they endeavoured to apprise the inhabitants of their danger, *Mahomet's* intelligence was so excellent that all their advices were intercepted; and he assembling all his forces, which consisted of the *Mohajerin*, the *Anfars*, and a powerful body raised out of the tribes, who had been his converts, he advanced against *Mecca*, which he soon invested with ten thousand men; so great had this impostor's power become at this time.

Great po-
licy of
Mahomet

It must be acknowledged that, upon this occasion, the prophet shewed himself to be at once a great general and a great politician. The dispositions he made, for attacking the town were masterly, and the orders he gave to his generals were merciful. He particularly ordered *Kaled* of whose impetuosity he seemed always to be apprehensive, not to act offensively, and he sent a formal message to invite the *Meccans*, to take an oath of allegiance to him, assuring them, in that case, of his protection. He committed the great standard of *Islamism*, to *Ali*. He ordered his generals to possess themselves of the most commanding passes about the city, and he placed himself in the rear of his army as the most proper post, for giving orders to the whole.

Those dispositions being made, *Haled*, who commanded the convert tribes, advanced to attack a party of the *Koreish*, who were assembled in the plain of *Mecca*, this he did with such success that he obliged them to fly into the city, which he entered amongst the fugitives, and thereby made himself master of it, with a great slaughter of the inhabitants.

Hishuma-
nity

This was the most shining period of our prophet's life. It is said, and perhaps very truly, that the conquest of *Mecca*, cost him only two men; from this we may easily conclude that he had a strong party within the walls of the place, and indeed from this time we perceive a total alteration in his plan of conduct and politicks. From being an inhuman butcher, he became a beneficent prince. The *Meccans*, and the other *Arabs*, found it their interest, instead of robbing and destroying one another to submit to him; they who did not do it, thro' conviction, did it thro' policy, and entering *Mecca* with great state and formality, he made a merit of destroying all the idols, that had been erected in that city. On this occasion, we are told that he was dressed in red, and that he entered *Mecca* upon his favourite camel attended in the most pompous manner; by his friends and generals The

Meccans

Meccans, seeing his formidable appearance, implored his mercy, which he immediately granted them in the most generous manner; and declared them from that moment to be a free people. The whole tenour of his conduct, was answerable to this generous, and indeed wise behaviour. He committed the guardianship of the *Caaba*, to *Othman* and his heirs for ever. In imitation of the founder of *Rome*, he declared *Mecca* to be an assylum or sanctuary for all persons; and such was the wisdom and moderation of his conduct that even *Sophian* his capital enemy, became his convert. He then proceeded to be solemnly inaugurated, and he compleated all his triumphs and successes; by receiving an oath of allegiance from his new subjects, and particularly from *Henda*, the celebrated female warrior, the wife of *Sophian*. The prophet however was far from making his generosity, and forgiveness, too cheap to the *Meccans*. He insisted, upon proscribing a certain number of his enemies; who had rendered themselves most obnoxious to his resentment, and particularly *Abu Fahl*. But notwithstanding this measure, *Abu Fahl*, and his companions were pardoned; and no more than three men and one woman, who were excessively obnoxious thro' their private vices, were put to death; tho' some authors add two more who suffered on this occasion.

Mahomet now began to exert those great talents that had been given him by nature, and in every measure of his government, he approved himself to be equally a great politician, and a great general. Sensible of the effects of appearances; he redoubled his zeal against idolatry, by which he had, at the same time, an opportunity of extending his conquests. For this purpose, he employed *Kaled*, who destroyed a famous idol, termed *Al Uzza*, with many others of the same kind, which had been rendered sacred by superstition. After this, *Kaled* advanced against the *Idimites*, whom he subdued with little or no loss to himself; but we are told; that this barbarian massacred them after their submission, and indeed, by the whole strain of his conduct, he seems to have been one of the most brutal conquerors, that ever scourged mankind. Even *Mahomet* himself was startled at his inhumanity, and is said to have once entertained some thoughts of putting him to death, but was prevented by some of his followers. *Mahomet's* zeal, however, against idolatry stirred up fresh enemies against him amongst the pagan tribes of the *Arabs*. He sent his general *Kaled*, who acted the part of a destroying angel wherever he came; under pretext of suppressing their idolatry. About four thousand of the tribes of *Hawayen* and *Thakif*, assembled under their generals *Malec* and *Doraid*, the latter of whom was upwards of one hundred years of age, in defence of their idol worship. They rendezvoused in the valley of *Honein*, about three miles from *Mecca*; and their appearance was so formidable that *Mahomet* marched in person to encounter them. He was at this time arrived to

Battle of
Honein

such a pitch of power that he was at the head of twelve thousand men ; which in *Arabia*, is accounted to be a vast army, not because that country is destitute of inhabitants, but because it is divided into an infinite number of little tribes or clans, who mostly herd amongst themselves, so that they seldom assemble in any large bodies. When *Mahomet* came to *Honein* he found the enemy drawn up in a most masterly manner, and in possession of all the heights that surrounded the valley ; but as he had a vast superiority of numbers, he instantly formed his line of battle, and mounting his white mule, he advanced to the charge at the head of his troops. But *Malec* had taken his measures so well that the *Moslem* army was in a manner cooped up in a defile amongst mountains, and being overpowered by a shower of darts and arrows, they were put into such disorder, that they began to fly towards *Mecca*. Nothing but the intrepidity of *Mahomet*, and a few of his friends who fought by his side, could have prevented his army from a total rout upon this occasion. To intrepidity he added stratagem. He had it seems, taught his mule to kneel, which his *Moslems* considered as somewhat supernatural, and as being a favourable omen ; and at the same time he threw a handful of dust against the enemies, with a solemn imprecation. His troops by those means were reinspired and being once more rallied, they attacked the idolaters with such fury, that most of them were cut in pieces. The *Thakafites* behaved with incomparable bravery and in general they fell in their ranks. *Malec* and his chief officers retired to *Al Tayef*, as *Doraid* did to *Awtas*.

gained by
Mahomet

Doraid, old as he was, soon appeared at the head of another army, which *Mahomet* sent *Obaid* to attack. *Obaid* lost his life in the encounter, but was succeeded in the command by *Abu Musa*, who completed the rout of the enemy and put *Doraid* to the sword.

who acts
with clemency.

We know of no inhuman use which the prophet made of those victories ; on the contrary, he acted with clemency and generosity. It is more than probable, that he saw by the daily increase of his enemies, it was impossible for him to gain his ends, by bloodshed and cruelty, which induced him to try milder methods. He had been put in great danger at the battle of *Honein*, and that of *Awtas* had cost him dear. He was afraid, that should he fail in success, his character must be greatly hurt, both with his friends and enemies, and he saw many of his new converts amongst the *Koreish*, ready to declare against him, on the first misfortune he should receive. He experienced this at the battle of *Honein*, and the experiment was too dangerous to be hazarded again. A great many female captives, had been taken in the last two engagements, but the *Moslems*, had some scruples with regard to enjoying them in concubinage ; *Mahomet* soon removed their difficulties by a fresh revelation from heaven, by which the *Moslems* were allowed even to marry such female slaves as they took in war after going thro' certain purifications,

even

even tho' their husbands were alive. But this decision was too impious, and too contradictory, to the prophet's former professions, to be universally received, and the most orthodox *Mahometans* have to this day some difficulties on that head. *Mahomet* himself seems not to have been quite clear about it. For we are told that he restored all the captives that were at his disposal, to their friends, and that he offered to purchase the liberty of those, who were in the hands of his soldiers; but that they, after his example, cheerfully resigned them.

The castle of *Al Tayef*, to which *Malec* had retired, was con- Siege of
Al Tayef.
sidered as the strongest fortress in all *Arabia*. *Mahomet* how-
ever, tho' he found himself under infinite difficulties resolved
if possible to make himself master of it. For this purpose he
contracted for a number of engineers, out of the tribe of
Daws, the most ingenious amongst the *Arabs*, in such opera-
tions, and got together a considerable number of battering
and other engines, for forming a regular siege. *Kaled* his ge-
neral, accordingly invested the place with the van of his army
while he himself laid waste the neighbouring country, great
part of which belonged to *Malec*, and having received a rein-
forcement of four hundred of the tribe of *Daws*, he regularly
formed the siege of the place, which was defended by the
idolatrous tribe of the *Thakafites*, the most warlike of all the
Arabs. *Mahomet* upon this occasion was foil'd. Tho' he carried
on his approaches with great courage, yet he met with repulse
upon repulse from *Malec*. He indeed made some breaches
in the walls of the place, but he was unable to mount them;
so vigorous was the defence made by the *Thakafites*; and thus
twenty days were spent in useless attempts to reduce the for-
tress. In the mean while nothing that could contribute to formed
and
his success, was omitted by the prophet. He promised liber-
ty to all the slaves that were within the garison, provided
they would desert from their masters, and he laid waste all
the country round; so that the *Thakafites*, had only a pros-
pect of famine before their eyes: but all was ineffectual, and
at last in great bitterness of spirit, he was obliged to raise the raised by
Mahomet
siege.

This disgrace might have been perhaps fatal to the prophet,
had it not been for his own frontless impudence in still for-
ging new revelations to disguise it; and for the immense
booty he made by being master of the open country. For
after he raised the siege, he took, *Waba* a town where the
Thakafites had deposited many of their most valuable effects,
and *Mahomet* upon a general muster of all his plunder, found His great
plunder
himself in possession of six thousand captives, twenty four
thousand camels, forty thousand sheep, and four thousand
pounds of silver, all taken from the enemy. He had at the
same time, the satisfaction to see the tribe of *Hawazen*, and
even *Malec* himself embrace his religion, but not before
they had received a valuable consideration from the prophet.

The *Hawzenites* had all their wives and children who had been made slaves, restored to them. *Malec* obtained restitution of all his effects, and one hundred camels besides, and was made commander in chief of all his countrymen, who should be converted to *Islamism*.

He gains
new pro-
f yrites.

It must be confessed, that upon this occasion *Mahomet* acted with wonderful policy and moderation. He softened the rigours of his discipline to the *Arabs*; so that the most sensible amongst them, thinking that it was a matter of indifference, whether they continued in their own religion or embraced his, chose the latter; which *Mahomet* never failed to accompany with great liberality and privileges. By some circumstances that have fallen from the *Moslem* authors, it would seem that the chief of his new converts were thoroughly convinced of his impostures, and did not sometimes spare turning them into ridicule, and upbraid him for his impieties. The prophet however, by his boundless generosity, made it their interest, not only to be silent, but to attach themselves to his cause; and we are told of many magnificent presents which he made to the heads of the *Arab* tribes, who were his new converts. He could not do this, however, without doing some injustice to his old friends, particularly the *Ansars*, and it required the utmost address of the prophet to keep them from mutinying against him, for his partiality to strangers. But *Mahomet* by his wonderful address, and by even parting with his own property to them, kept them in temper, tho' they sometimes gave him broad hints, that they knew him to be no better than an impostor. We may therefore at this time fairly presume, that the opinion of our prophet's mission was supported by a confederacy, which it was the interest of his followers to encourage; and indeed, considering the many gross inconsistencies he had been driven into, it could not have been otherwise. It must at the same time be owned, that he was attended by many bigots, who found it easy to swallow the greatest absurdities. In short, every thing conspired to promote his cause, for whether the lukewarm converts were sincere or not, they contributed by their importance and numbers, to give distant nations the highest ideas of his power and success.

He visits
Mecca

Tho' *Mahomet* had failed in his attempt upon *Al Tayef*, yet he still kept up his reputation, by making converts of his principal enemies, and by the generous distribution of all the plunder he had made. Before he returned to *Medina*, he repaired in a pilgrim's habit to *Mecca*, where he most devoutly visited the *Caaba*; and confirmed *Otab*, whom he had left governor of *Mecca*, in his post as he did *Moad*, in that of *Iman* or chief priest. He soon after returned to *Medina*, which he entered amidst the acclamations of his followers. It was about this time that *Mondar* the king of *Barem* professed himself a *Moslem*, as did *Horeth* the *Sadaite*, with all his tribe,

tribe, upon which they were received into the prophet's patronage and protection.

Those conversions, with that of all the *Koreish*, the leading tribe in *Arabia*, as being the descendants of *Ishmael*, so greatly improved the figure of *Mahomet* amongst the *Arabs* in general, that this year was denominated the "year of embassies", from the great number of ambassadors which came from the neighbouring states and tribes, to profess their belief in *Mahomet*. He had at the same time a son called *Ibrahim*, born to him by *Mary* the *Copt*, which seemed to compleat his felicity, for we are told that on this occasion, he treated his friends with two lambs, and the infant being shaved when he was seven days old, he distributed to the poor as much silver as the hair of the child (which was all cut off) weighed. Such circumstances tho' otherwise immaterial, serve to mark the great simplicity of living the prophet had adopted, and the extraordinary temperance he always practised. This undoubtedly encreased the vigour of his constitution, which his wives, with whom he continued to indulge himself, in the most criminal excesses, found to be still unabated, and every day added new victims to his seraglio, to the no small mortification of his former wives. The truth is, the prophet seems to have been not a little captious in his amours; for he sometimes put away his best beloved wives though, thro' motives of policy, on account of the power of their families, he generally took them back. It is extremely difficult, considering the prepossession of all the *Moslem* authors in favour of their prophet, to give the reader any just idea of that mixture of fear, terror, love, interest, pride and ambition, which at this time operated on every measure in which our prophet was concerned. His sagacity, appears in the agents he made use of, whom he chose so well that notwithstanding the numberless expeditions he had on foot, and dangers with which he was beset, he was seldom or never betrayed. The *Caabites*, an *Arab* tribe, whom he had taken into his possession, refused to pay their contributions, being instigated thereto by the *Tamimites*, but both tribes were reduced to their duty after a gentle correction from the prophet.

His son born.

He subdues the *Caabites*

On this occasion, we cannot help mentioning to his honour, that *Mahomet* was one of the greatest patrons of poetry ever known; for tho' the *Tamimites*, had provoked him in a very high degree, yet when they sent some of their poets and orators to make their peace, the prophet was so well pleased with their compositions, that he not only restored them all their prisoners, but made them such presents as he generally bestowed upon the ambassadors of sovereign princes. It appears farther, that *Mahomet* himself entertained poets in his service, and that he often took a pleasure in comparing the production of his own bards, who seem to have been the most excellent in all *Arabia* with those of others. He had not however the meanness to depreciate the poets who missed

His love of poetry

of the laurel, for, as we have seen, he nobly rewarded those of the *Tamimites*, tho' their productions were far inferior to those of his own poets.

Hej: 9 But the most illustrious proof of our prophet's love to poetry, was shown in his treatment of *Caab*, an excellent poet who lived at *Mecca*. This bard was one of our prophet's greatest enemies, and having composed some very satirical verses against him; he was excepted out of *Mahomet's* pardon, when he took *Mecca* and doomed it to destruction. Upon this, *Caab* fled from *Mecca*, but had the resolution, next year, to wait upon *Mahomet* at *Medina*; where he repeated before him in the *Mosque*, a very fine poem, which not only disarmed our prophet of all his resentment, but procured him his friendship, for we are told, that *Mahomet* made him a present of his cloak, which the poet's family afterwards sold to a calif, for about four thousand pounds sterling.

His expedition to *Tabuc*. *Mahomet* was now arrived at so high a pitch of glory, as to draw upon himself the jealousy of the emperor *Heraclius*; whose troops made some movements upon the frontiers of *Arabia*, which indicated a design to invade it. This alarmed the prophet, whose intelligence upon all occasions seems to have been early and exact. He was indeed no stranger to the degeneracy of the *Greeks*, but he knew at the same time, their power to be very great, and that one fortunate campaign, might ruin all he had been doing. It was now the height of summer, the harvest ready to be cut down, and intollerable heats prevailed thro' all the plains over which the *Moslems* were to march, before they could come up with their enemies. It required all the resolution and authority *Mahomet* was master of, to put his army in motion upon this occasion. It consisted of no fewer than thirty thousand men, and the sums he was obliged to raise were such, as greatly distressed his principal followers. *Mahomet*, however, conquered all difficulties, and tho' his army in their march suffered so much that it was called the troops of distress, yet he arrived at *Tabuc*, a town laying half way between *Medina* and *Damascus*, time enough to disconcert all the schemes of his enemies. His appearance at this place, where he lay for three weeks, with so formidable an army, greatly increased his power and reputation. The neighbouring princes and states, knowing the price of *Mahomet's* friendship and protection, sent him ambassadors, and either embraced *Islamism*, or submitted to pay tribute. But, besides the reasons already mentioned, there is the less reason to be surprised, when we reflect upon the intollerable exactions of the *Greek* governors, under *Heraclius*, who behaved as so many tyrants, in their respective provinces. Amongst other princes who submitted to *Mahomet* on this occasion, was *Yohanna* or *John* sovereign of *Ailah* and a christian. His territory lay upon the seacoast, and he obtained the prophet's protection, for himself and his subjects, upon the condition of his paying for the same three thousand pieces of

of gold every year. His submission was of great consequence to the prophet, as it brought along with it that of most of the trading people in *Syria* and *Arabia Felix*, and pleased *Mahomet* so well, that he made *Yohanna* a present of a rich cloak, which the caliphs afterwards purchased, for about three thousand marks English, and after that, fell into the hands of the *Ottoman* sultans, who deposited it in a gold chest.

The successes that attended the impostor in this expedition, were so striking that the *Greeks*, who had been drawn together against his dominions, retired with the utmost precipitation, which left him at liberty to extend his acquisitions. Two cities of *Syria*, *Jarrab Adrah*, submitted to pay him annually two hundred *Dinars*, (a piece of gold, worth about thirteen shillings and sixpence English, each) and he laid other towns and districts under proportional contributions. But in the mean while, *Kaled* was employed in reducing such as were refractory. *Ocaider* the christian prince of *Dowmat*, fell into his hands, together with the city and forts, and he put his brother *Hasan* to the sword. *Kaled*, at the same time, carried off, from *Ocaider's* territories, a large booty, in camels, horses, and curiaffes, all which was so agreeable to the prophet that he honoured *Ocaider* with his protection, and restored him to his liberty, upon his consenting to pay him an annual tribute. Before *Mahomet* returned from this famous expedition to *Tabuc*, we are told that he made another attempt to convert the emperor *Heraclius*, but we hear of no answer that was returned to his application. He returned, however, in great triumph to *Medina*, after escaping a conspiracy, which some of his pretended converts had formed against his life. *Mahomet* was too well acquainted with the state of affairs, and the characters of those he he had to deal with, to be much imposed upon by such conversions. He easily judged between the effects of zeal and conveniency ; but he required a strict exterior, that he might keep up a respect for a religion in the minds of the common people, which was his chief aim.

Upon his return to *Medina*, he disgraced several of those pretended converts, by ordering the other *Moslems* to hold no communication with them, during a certain time ; for having declined to attend him to *Tabuc*, but upon their submission, he pardoned them, still grounding every thing he did upon revelation, till he at last found himself the absolute sovereign of all the peninsula of *Arabia*. The glory he had acquired by his expedition to *Tabuc*, and the terror of the great body of troops, he now kept on foot, forced the most refractory of the pagan and christian *Arabs*, and even the inhabitants of *Al Tayef*, the most powerful of all those idolators, to give up their idols to his mercy, and to submit to his power. By their submission the whole warlike tribe of *Thakif* was reduced.

His farther policy

The prophet however, finding his power thus firmly established; began to retract some of the indulgencies, which thro' motives of conveniency he had shewn to the idol tribes, whom he termed associators, because they associated other beings in the worship of God, and called them Gods. He even comprehended certain sects of the christians under the same denomination. His zeal for his own religion grew proportionably strong; he pretended, as has been already observed, that *Islamism* was no other than a revival of the religion of *Abraham*, and the patriarchs, who worshiped one God; but who were extremely ceremonious in performing their devotions at the *Caaba*, the most antient and holy temple in the world. The impostor being well acquainted with the vast effects which, shew, and pomp, has in matters of religion, pretended now to restore this piece of patriarchal devotion to all its primitive purity. He received some countenance in this undertaking, from the practice of the idolatrous *Arabs* themselves, who frequently visited the *Caaba*, with extraordinary marks of devotions, but debased as the prophet pretended with certain superstitious rights, which he now wanted to abolish. This was the easier for him to do, as he had raised himself to be the high priest as well as the sovereign of his people; and exacted from his followers an implicit obedience in both characters.

He makes *Abubeker* his deputy

But finding that the situation of his affairs required him to reside close at *Medina* where he knew he had many secret enemies, he pitched upon *Abubeker* to be his vicegerent in performing the visitation of the *Caaba*, which was this year to be held with great solemnity, no fewer than twenty camels being devoted to be slain as victims in the prophet's name. While *Abubeker* was on his journey, with a train of three hundred attendants, *Mahomet* dispatched *Ali* after him, with a fresh chapter of the *Koran* which he pretended to have received from heaven, and which revoked all the edicts, he had formerly granted in favour of associators, and all the treaties he had concluded with them. *Ali*, who for expedition sake was mounted on the prophet's favorite slit eared camel, overtook *Abubeker* before he reached *Mecca*; and in an assembly of the people, he declared himself to be the messenger of the apostle of God to them, and as such he read to them the chapter of *Koran* in question, and made a declaration of four points, "First that all idolators be prohibited after that year, from coming near the temple of *Mecca*; secondly that no person thereafter should presume to go round the *Caaba* naked; thirdly that paradise was open to true believers only; and, fourthly that public faith is to be kept". It is hard to say, in what manner the prophet reconciled this last promulgation, with the revocation he had made of his own edicts and treaties. Every thing however was transacted with the greatest decorum; the victims were killed, and the prophet's two deputies returned to *Medina*. The joining *Ali* in commission

revokes his edicts

Hej. 10

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C H A P. III.

*History of the farther conquests and death of Mahomet
and of the caliphs his successors to the year 680.*

His pre- tended mi- racles ex- ploded

The reader's attention will be much better employed in His far-observing the progress of *Mahomet's* power and policy. He then was now possessed of strength sufficient to crush all the opposition that could be raised against him by the petty tribes of *Arabia*; and the active *Kaled* was every day propagating his dominion with fire and sword. We may therefore find three *æras* in which our prophet suited his policy to his situation. The first was, when he had formed his party at *Medina*; and when he found it necessary to season his new converts in blood

blood, and acts of cruelty. The second was from the time he took possession of *Mecca* when he found it expedient to strengthen and enlarge his power, by acts of beneficence and humanity: and the last *æra* is what we are now treating of, when he found himself in a condition to give a loose to his natural zeal and cruelty.

Yaman reduced

By this time, the great province of *Yaman*, which was governed by five kings, embraced *Islamism*, or rather pretended to do it to prevent being plundered by the prophet, but he was now in a condition to make his dominion in temporals to wait upon that in spirituals; and after he had received the submission of the five princes, he sent two of his chief followers *Abu Musa*, and *Moad*, with a large body of troops to govern the province as his lieutenants; while his other generals were successfully employed in destroying all the remains of idolatry in *Arabia*.

Mahomet loses his sons

Tho' our prophet was now pretty far advanced in years, yet he continued to lead a most voluptuous life, amongst his wives and women; but he had the mortification to see all his male issue die before him. One of his sons *Al Kasem* had been dead for some time, and *Ibrahim* his surviving one died this year. The prophet could not conceal his sensibility of this affliction, and it afforded some matter of railery to his temporising converts, who reproached him as one whose tail was cut off, that is in their language, as being childless. But *Mahomet* knew well, how to repair the mortifications he suffered on this occasion, he pretended to have had an extraordinary interview with the angel *Gabriel*, who administered to him matter of consolation, and who, after examining him, declared the prophet to be better versed than he himself was in matters of divinity. This restored him to fresh credit amongst his followers.

obtains more converts

Kola the most powerful man of *Al Tayef*, and his wife, became sincere converts to *Islamism*, after long hankering between it and idolatry. The *Moslems* of *Nairan* came in flocks to visit *Mecca*, to which they were conducted, by the prophet's orders, and *Firuz* a person of great eminence embraced *Islamism*. His example was followed by *Farwar*, lieutenant in *Syria* to the emperor *Heraclius*, whose conversion was attended with some magnificent presents he sent to the prophet. It appears, however, that *Farwar's* design was only to engage the prophet to protect him against his master, who soon after put him to death. This year the prophet sent *Ali* to reduce such of the inhabitants in *Nairan*, who were either christians or idolators, to *Islamism*; in which he seems to have succeeded pretty well partly by force and partly by treaty. Upon those christians who held out, and whom *Mahomet* would have found great difficulty in reducing, a severe tribute was imposed, and the treaty with the impostor, was signed by *Said* the christian prince of that country and by *Jesujab* his bishop, both of them of the *Jacobite* profession, and who by means of rich presents, besides the stipulated

lated tribute obtained from the prophet, and his general *Ali*, some indulgence in point of religion.

The affairs of the prophet were now so well established that visits *Mec-* he resolved to set out for *Mecca*, and there to perform what he *ca.* called the pilgrimage of *Valediction*, which was to serve as a model for all succeeding pilgrimages, of the same kind. To impress his followers with the greater reverence for his mission, he took care that his journey from *Medina* to *Mecca*, which could not be performed in less than twelve days, should be as magnificent as possible. His train, upon this occasion, we are told, consisted of upwards of an hundred thousand people, and the camels which carried the pavilion in which his wives and concubines were enclosed, made no small part of the procession. His first care, before setting out, was to anoint himself, and the pilgrimage was proclaimed with the greatest solemnity throughout all *Arabia*. A vast number of camels, destined for victims, attended him, and innumerable were the prayers he said, and the incurvations he performed while he was upon the journey. The *Caaba* itself is part of a large building, of a square form, twenty-four cubits in length, from north to south; twenty-three in breadth, from east to west; and twenty-seven in height. Within it are two stones, a white one and a black one, which the superstition of the times rendered objects of idolatry, and which are now held in the highest veneration by the *Mahometans*. As to the decorations of the *Caaba* itself, many of them are silver, and the whole of them are as magnificent as the *Mahometan* religion admits of; and, according to the best information we have, the whole edifice is enclosed within a separate roof, and by separate walls. But the truth is, as we have no description of it, but from inaccurate *Moslem* writers, all *Christians* being prohibited access to it, our ideas of it are but confined. We understand, however, that this holy house, for, in some respects, it seems to resemble the house of *Loretto*, is inclosed within a square colonade, supported by no less than four hundred and forty-eight pillars, and adorned by thirty-eight gates; the whole surmounted with a number of small cupolas, and minarets or turkish steeples, all of them gilded, and making a very pleasing appearance. The *Moslem* traditions, concerning the antiquity and sanctity of this holy house, are absurd in the highest degree; but we must not forget, that near it stands, under a neat cupola, the famous well of *Zemzem*, which, being probably an excellent mineral, is held by the *Arabs* to have miraculous virtues in the cure of many diseases, and, when drank with faith, is reckoned to be of sovereign efficacy in removing all spiritual maladies.

The ridiculous ceremonies observed by *Mahomet*, when he arrived at this place of pilgrimage, are to this day observed
Account of his pil-
by grimage,

by his followers, and form the main part of their devotion. We are told he entered *Mecca*, which is twice as large and populous as *Medina*, as he did when he first made himself master of it, and stationed his men in several posts about the city; after his arrival at the *Caaba*, the ceremonies he performed were plainly of idolatrous original, and those, too, rank in their kind. He kissed, with great fervency, the corner of the black stone, already mentioned; he run three times, and walked four times round the *Caaba*; went to a place, whence tradition says *Abraham* stood, repeated his salutation to the black stone, then going out of the city, he made solemn proclamation of his belief in the unity of God, in the following short sentences, "God is great; There is no God but God," and the like; he then skipt and walked seven times between two mountains, lying in the neighbourhood of *Mecca*, and made use of a number of frantic gestures, by looking behind and round him, in imitation of *Hagar*, seeking water for her son. He next went to *Arafet*, a third mountain, where he made a sermon to the people, to instruct them in the ceremonies of the pilgrimage, and he closed the whole of that day's exercises, with prayers and exhortations.

Next morning, before sun-rise, he rose from the ground, where he slept all night, prayed in the *Caaba*, and then, in imitation of *Abraham*, who had put the devil to flight in that manner, he threw seven stones at three pillars, repeating, as he threw every stone, "God is great." This was performed in the valley of *Mina*, and is repeated to this day by every pilgrim. *Mahomet* next slew the victims, again harangued the people, and produced a fresh passage of the *Coran*, in confirmation of his mission; and the whole ceremony was finished, by giving the remains of the victims to the poor, after the rich had fed heartily upon them. We are told, however, that the pilgrims at present, after the victims are devoured, shave their heads and cut their nails, and bury what they shave and cut off in the same place; and that they then take a solemn leave of the *Caaba*.

Reflec-
tion.

We should not have been thus particular in the relation of those ridiculous ceremonies (of which, however, many are omitted, that were practised by the prophet, and are still so by his followers) had not several authors, in some reputation for learning, spoke favourably of *Mahomet*, on account of the simplicity of his doctrine, as they term it, and his abhorrence of idolatry. Whereas, by the best accounts we have, even from *Moslem* authors, their worship upon this occasion, which is the most solemn they know, is, in fact, a scene of disguised idolatry, drawn from the practice of *Pagan* ages, which *Mahomet* found himself obliged to adopt, on account of their antiquity, and the rooted prepossessions of

of the *Arabs*. The *Moslem* accounts of this peregrination is interlarded with a stale miracle performed by the prophet's camel, who knelt down in reverence, as he was pronouncing a passage in the *Coran*. And this ridiculous incident has been celebrated, with uncommon pains, by the favourers of our prophet and his religion. The reader is to remark, that the whole of this celebrated pilgrimage took up nine days, that the pilgrims were drest in a particular habit, sacred to that devotion; and that *Mahomet* repeated the same upon the arrival of *Ali*, who having been absent before, insisted upon being initiated into the sacred mysteries. *Mahomet*, before he left *Medina*, on this occasion, reformed the *Arab* kalender, which had run into great confusion, by occasionally transferring several sacred, to other, months; and by certain intercallations, which they learned of the *Jews*, for the conveniency of reducing their *Lunar* to *Solar* years. The reader, perhaps, needs not be put in mind, that, by a tradition from the prophet, the *Mahometan*, who does not once in his life-time perform the pilgrimage at *Mecca*, may as well die a *Jew* or a *Christian*.

We are now come to the eleventh year of the *Hejra*, which Hei. 11. was the last of the prophet's life. He had received the submission of a considerable *Arab* tribe, in the province of *Yaman*, where *Moad* commanded, and administered to them out an ar- the oath of allegiance. *Mahomet* was extremely pleased with my under this acquisition, which was signified to him, by an embassy *Osama*. from the new converts, consisting of no fewer than an hundred persons. Soon after, he came to a resolution of signally avenging the death of his favourite servant *Zeid*, who, as we have already seen, was killed in the battle of *Muta*. With this view he put *Osama*, *Zeid*'s son, a youth of no more than twenty years of age, at the head of his troops, and gave him *Abubeker*, with some of his most experienced generals, to serve under him, together with the great standard of *Islamism*. But it was plain, at this time, that the prophet's health was declining, which obliges us to look back to the time of the siege of *Al Kamus*, when he killed the giant *Marhab*.

This champion had a sister, whose name was *Hareth*, who, Account after *Mahomet* had taken the place, invited him to eat part of the of a shoulder of mutton, of which the impostor was particularly fond, and which *Hareth*, to revenge her brother's death, impregnated with a very strong poison. *Basbar*, one of *Mahomet*'s attendants, having eaten of the mutton, instantly dropt down dead. The prophet had tasted it, and though he immediately spit it out of his mouth, he found himself poisoned, and ordered the remaining part to be burnt. *Hareth*, being questioned by *Mahomet*, for this execrable act, she made answer, "That she knew, if he was a prophet, the poison could have no effect upon him, and if he was not, that it must have delivered them from his tyranny." It is said

said that he gave up *Hareth* to the power of *Bashar's* parents, who put her to death.

Be this as it will, it is pretty certain, that in the year we treat of, he felt the effects of the poison encrease to such a degree, that it affected the whole mass of his blood, and threw him into the most excruciating pains. He had the first symptom of his approaching end in the apartment of *Zenobia*, one of his favourite wives, and being visited by *Bashar's* mother, he told her that he was tormented by the same poison which had put an end to her son's life. According even to some *Moslem* accounts, for which there seems to be great probability, the prophet, ever since he tasted the poison, which was three years before, had, at intervals, been afflicted with most violent agonies; and it was visible he could not long survive.

Two impostors
start up;

His illness, undoubtedly, encouraged two impostors, like himself, to take up his trade, and to declare themselves prophets. Their names were *Moseilama*, and *Awsad*, called, in detestation, by the *Arabs*, the two lyars. The former was of the province of *Yamama*, the latter of *Najran*; both of them were men of abilities and power in their own countries; and made so formidable a progress as greatly alarmed the prophet. *Aswad*, in particular, possessed some qualities of an impostor in common with *Mahomet* himself. He was eloquent, a gift which he said he owed to two angels, with whom he was very conversant; and he was possessed of a certain faculty of legerdemain, or juggling, which took greatly with the lower kind of people. Having by these means got together a vast following, he declared himself to be a prophet, and made himself master of *Al Tayef*, *Najran*, and *Yaman*, three of the best of *Mahomet's* provinces. His progress, which was owing to *Mahomet's* illness, alarmed that impostor so greatly, that he sent orders to certain of his trusty assassins, amongst the tribes who believed in him, to dispatch him. A conspiracy was accordingly formed against *Aswad*, at the head of which was one *Kais*, and they found means to gain over *Aswad's* own wife, whose former husband that impostor had murdered. By her means the conspirators were introduced into *Aswad's* house, where they cut off his head, while his wife was persuading his guards that the noise he was making to be rescued, was owing to the holy spirit, by which he was then agitated. This conspiracy to destroy *Aswad*, had been so well laid by the prophet, that he ventured to predict his death, before any accounts of it came, which his deluded followers attributed to an information he received from the angel *Gabriel*.

one of
them as-
sassinated.

Account
of *Mahomet's*
death,

The death of *Mahomet* was of a piece with his life, full of deceit and hypocrisy, when the paroxysms of his distemper, which were very violent, gave him leave to practise them. He, however, had intervals, in which he was at ease, and, during them, he gave his orders with the same calmness

as usual. But finding himself growing worse, he assembled together all his wives, and desired to be left to the care of *Ayesha*, to whose apartment he was immediately carried. Here he grew worse, and complaining he was all on fire, ordered the women who were present to pour large buckets full of water upon him, which gave him so much relief, that next day, he went, supported by a friend, to a mosque, where he said prayers, and made an exhortation to the people. Upon this, as upon many other occasions, he gave a proof how conversant he was with the writings and history of the Old Testament. For, mounting his pulpit, he made an appeal to his people, of pretty much the same nature as that made to the people of *Israel*, by the prophet *Samuel*, before he resigned the government; inviting those he had wounded in person or reputation, to take satisfaction of him in kind; and desiring all whom he had wronged in money-matters to make their demands upon him. No claimant immediately appearing to the last invitation, he continued his prayers and sermon; but, at last, a fellow, probably by the connivance of the prophet himself, entered his demand upon him for about six shillings, which the prophet most meekly paid; saying, "that it was better to suffer in this world than in the next."

This glaring, and, indeed, absurd, piece of hypocrisy in a public robber of provinces and kingdoms, had great effect in the impostor's favour. It was attended by repeated effusions of enthusiasm. He assumed, as he generally did, the office of mediator between God and the *Moslems*, who had been killed fighting under his standard; and had the impudence to declare, that God, having given him his choice of this world and the next, he had preferred the latter. Upon this *Abubeker*, who, upon the news of the prophet's illness, had come to *Medina*, from the army, bursting into tears, called out, "That they had given him the entire disposal of their souls."

While we are upon this most shining period of *Mahomet's* history, as a prophet, we cannot help remarking, that either the *Moslem* historians are unfaithfully translated, or that nothing can be more ridiculous, incoherent, and silly, than what passed in this, and all other interviews between the prophet and his followers. Their conversations are vague, declamatory, and ill supported; their revelations and miracles were so many cheats, easy to be carried on, by collusion working upon credulity. Nor have we, in all their transactions, a single one, that carries with it any characters of magnanimity, humanity, or charity. We have already observed the motives that might influence their leader to such of his actions as bore any resemblance to those virtues; and it is plain, from the whole tenor of his conduct, that he was entirely guided by motives of interest; and on all occasions, when those ceased, he relapsed into his natural cruelty and barbarity;

Reflec-
ions upon
his histo-
ry,

barbarity ; but, indeed, the incongruity and impertinence of his jargon is not peculiar to this our prophet's age and country, *England* above a century ago, was under the scourge of enthusiasts, who, in their prayers, conversation, and great part of their conduct, seem to have copied after *Mahomet*.

and his
policy.

Be this as it will, it is certain, that the plan of empire which our prophet pursued and left behind him, did not partake of his discourse or doctrine, for it was one of the most permanent that the world ever beheld. We are far from pretending to say that *Mahomet* was void of real enthusiasm; if he had been so, he never could have completed, as he did, his great designs. But then, his was a species of enthusiasm that never affected his conduct as a politician or general; it was made up of perfidy and deceit, which had taught him they were the justifiable means for attaining his ends. There seems, however, to have been in his councils a great spirit of intrigue and self-interest, which the prophet sometimes found difficult to manage. It is certain, as we have already hinted, that *Abubeker* had the greatest share of his esteem, but the power of *Ali*, *Omer*, and many other great men about him, made him extremely cautious how he proceeded in naming his successor. He intimated his intention, however, in a most artful manner, without expressing it. He had always made his political functions subservient to his prophetic, or sacerdotal character ; and finding himself now near his end, he employed *Abubeker*, on all occasions, to supply his place, when he was too weak to say prayers or to preach in public: this had the desired effect, as we shall see hereafter.

His last
will.

The prophet being carried back to his wife's apartment, had a violent relapse of his disorder, and complained that no prophet ever suffered so much as he did. One of his last actions was to send for the chiefs of his faithful Ansars of *Medina*, to whom he gave in charge, as his last will, first to clear *Arabia* of all idolators ; secondly, in matters of privilege, to make no distinction between themselves and their proselytes ; and, lastly, to employ themselves incessantly in prayer. Those orders were punctually fulfilled, and *Arabia* is the only place of all the *Mahometan* dominions, where a different religion is not permitted to be exercised for pecuniary considerations.

He grows
delirious.

On the *Friday* before he died, he was, according to the *Moslem* authors, obliged to desire *Abubeker* to officiate for him in the mosque ; but finding himself able to be carried thither, he pronounced some prayers, tho' with so feeble a voice, that *Abubeker* was obliged to repeat them aloud to the people. Upon his return to his wife's apartment, he conversed with his friends upon matters of religion, and called for pen, ink, and paper, to give them some written directions with regard to their conduct. Though the *Moslem* authors pretend that this was the effect of a delirium, occasioned by the violence of his disorder, yet great suspicions arise

arise from it that he was capable both of reading and writing, though he thought fit to dissemble both, that he might give the more supernatural appearance to his mission. It is certain, that nothing of his conduct, during his last moments, appeared delirious. But we are told that *Omar* objected to the bringing him materials for writing, because he had always professed himself unable either to read or write, and because the *Coran* was a sufficient directory both for their faith and practice. But others in the company, who perhaps were more in the secret of his hypocrisy, or rather, less cautious of concealing it, were for gratifying the prophet in his demand, and words ran so high, that the prophet ordered them all to depart out of the room, because the presence of a prophet, as he said, was not a place for them to dispute in. Soon after this, *Ossamar*, with some of his chief officers, who, with his army, had continued encamped at *Jorf*, from the time he heard of the prophet's illness, within a small distance of *Medina*, came to pay their last duty to the prophet; they were admitted to his presence, but found him in a fainting fit. He recovered, however, so well, as to give the general his benediction, but we know of no orders he gave concerning his successor; which, undoubtedly, was expected upon this occasion. Soon after this, the prophet expired, on the twelfth day of the *Rabi*, which answers to the seventeenth of *June*, in the eleventh year of the *Hejra*, and of Christ 632, and in the sixty-third, or, as others say, the sixty-fifth year of his age.

His death,

We have already been so copious upon the character of this impostor, that we can add nothing to it here but some particulars, which shew how deeply his arts had wrought upon the brains of his followers. At first they would not believe that he was dead, but that, like Jesus, he had ascended into heaven, from whence, in a short time, he would return. This opinion was warmly insisted upon by *Omar*, and the bulk of the people, and disputes ran so high between them and *Abubeker*, and *Al' Abas*, the prophet's uncle, who maintained that he was actually dead, that *Osamar*, who had countermanded the march of the troops into *Syria*, returned, with his army, to *Medina*, in order to preserve the public tranquility, till a new successor to the prophet, or, as the *Arabs* termed him, a new califf should be chosen.

Competition about his successor.

The chief competitors for this high dignity of succeeding *Mahomet*, seem to have been *Abu'eker*, *Omar*, and *Ali*. The latter had certainly the best-grounded pretensions on account of his early conversion, his zeal, his services, and his double relation, of son-in-law, and cousin-germain, to the prophet. *Mahomet*, in his last moments, had taken care to commit the disposal of his body, and his burial, both which were attended with innumerable purifications and ceremonies, to *Ali*; all which employed him so much, that he had very little time to canvas for his election. But his greatest mis-

Account of the candidates.

A GENERAL HISTORY

fortune lay, in having for his enemy, *Ayesha*, the favourite wife of *Mahomet*, who, besides that honour, was the repository of all his greatest secrets, and the daughter of *Abubeker*; all which gave her a kind of decisive interest in the approaching election. We are likewise told, that she was a woman of great intellectual perfections, and no less beauty.

Ali had incurred this lady's displeasure, by accusing her on account of the nocturnal ramble with *Sofwin*, already mentioned, of incontinency to the prophet, and which she never could forgive. *Omar's* pretensions to be califf seems to have been founded, upon his own great credit with the *Moslems*; and the interest of his daughter, *Hassa*, both which were so very considerable, that the prophet having, on account of her indiscreet jealousy of *Mary the Copt*, repudiated her, was obliged to receive her back to his bed. It is here likewise proper to mention, that there was a very tender and unusual friendship between *Hassa* and *Ayesha*, so that the latter likewise was in the interest of *Omar*.

Abubeker
chosen
Califf.

The circumstance of *Mahomet's* death, however, was a very embarrassing one. *Omar* threatened to have recourse to arms; but *Abubeker*, asking the people, whether they worshipped *Mahomet*, or the God of *Mahomet*, and telling them, that if the latter was the object of their worship, they were in the right; but that the former was subject to certain death as other mortal beings. This observation, which is, perhaps, the most sensible one we meet with among the *Moslems*, being seasonably strengthened, by certain quotations from the *Coran*, brought the people over to *Abubeker's* opinion. But nothing less than the authority of *Omar*, and the presence of his troops, would have been effectual for preventing the *Mohajerin* and the *Ansars*, two sects that have been already described, from coming to blows, about their several rights of electing a successor to the prophet. At first it was proposed that each should elect a *Califf*, but that proposal being rejected, *Abubeker* himself named *Omar*, and *Abu Obeidah*. The reader is here to observe that *Ali*, busied in the charge of the prophet's burial, was not present on this occasion, which probably was the reason why *Omar* was not chosen; and the latter being afraid, that the interest of *Ali* might be greater than his, instantly waved his pretensions, by resigning them to *Abubeker*, who was recognized for *Califf* by all present; *Omar* himself being the first to swear fealty to him.

Forces *Ali*
to ac-
know-
ledge him.

The first use which *Abubeker* made of his high power, was to order *Omar* to repair with a body of troops to the house where *Ali* was assembled in consultation with his friends, and to burn it about them, if he and they did not immediately recognize his election. In *Omar's* absence *Abubeker*, who affected great disinterestedness and humility, offered to resign his new dignity to *Ali*, if the people thought him more worthy of it; but this served only the more to fix them

in their new choice, and *Ali*, finding how matters went, acquiesced in their election; as he had not only the voice of the people, but the interest of *Omar*, the prophet's wives, and that of the principal *Moslems*, against him. It appears however, that both he and *Omar* afterwards found they had been outwitted by *Abubeker*, and that they repented of having recognized him.

Abubeker, by his great abilities, both in peace and war, justified the partiality that *Mahomet* had always shewn in his favour. He was, at the time of his election, past sixty years of age; his person tall and thin, his complexion swarthy, and the hair both of his head and beard tinged with the juice of a plant, called *Al' Catam*, and that of the cyprus tree, called *Al' Henna*, which gave them a beautiful red colour and which had been made use of by the prophet for the same purposes. In his living he was excessively abstemious, regular in his devotions, and held money in the highest contempt. Some of the *Moslem* authors affirm, that *Mahomet* named him to his wives, as his successor, but they opposed him with a vehemence, which shewed they put no great value upon his divine character, for which they were reproached by the prophets. When the body of *Mahomet*, after being properly purified by *Ali*, and gone through all its ablutions, came to be buried, a new dispute arose amongst his followers, concerning the proper place of its interment. But the new califf hearing some propose *Mecca*, and others *Jerusalem*, put a stop to all farther altercations, by saying, that he had heard *Mahomet* declare, that a prophet ought to be buried on the very spot where he dies. This was most punctually performed, a grave was dug under the floor of *Ayesha's* apartment, where the prophet died and his body remained, into which it was deposited by *Ali*, and *Al' Abas* his uncle; and then the grave, which had been cased with bricks, was filled up with earth, and is to this day discernable by a small convexity.

Character
of *Abubeker*.

Mahomet
buried.

Those circumstances are not in themselves important, but they become so through the veneration which the followers of *Mahomet* still retained for his body, and the vast mistakes into which writers have been led upon that head. Some have pretended that it was suspended, by two magnets, in the air; and this foolish opinion has generally prevailed in Christendom. Others pretend that his body was buried at *Mecca*, and the ignorant *Turks* at this time believe so, and on that account hold that city in a double degree of veneration. It is incredible what desolation those absurdities have wrought in the world.

Notwithstanding matters were thus quieted at *Medina*, things did not go so smoothly on in other parts of the new califf's dominions. The immortality of the prophet had been strongly impressed upon great numbers of his followers, who, finding him actually dead, relapsed to their former professions.

Many of
the *Arabs*
revolt.

professions, those of Christianity, Judaism, or Paganism; many of them had even gone off from Islamism during the latter part of the prophet's life, and no fewer than eleven tribes are enumerated, who relapsed then, and after his death.

The *Mec-*
cans pro-
claim
Abubeker.

The *Meccans* had never been entirely reconciled to his authority, and *Otab*, *Mahomet's* governor of that city, apprehensive of a revolt, had secreted himself from the people's fury. But *Sohail*, one of the heads of the *Koreish*, prevented any revolution of that kind, by his seasonable representations, from taking place. It is said he compassed his end, by remonstrating upon the folly and disgrace of their inconstancy. But their acquiescence may be much more naturally accounted for.

Mahomet, for many of his impieties and cruelties, was personally obnoxious to the *Meccans*, and his great empire had devolved upon *Abubeker*, who was their fellow citizen, in high esteem for his virtue and sanctity, and fully able by his power, either to punish or reward them. As to religion, it appears to be a matter of great indifference to them, and they had reason to think, that their civil concerns were safe under *Abubeker*. In short, they professed themselves, and continued to be, true *Moslems*. But this was not the case with the apostate tribes. Some of them thought that *Mahomet's* death sufficiently evinced him to be an impostor; and others, not having the same regard for *Abubeker* that they had for his predecessor, refused to pay the tribute imposed upon them by the prophet, and betook themselves to arms.

The rebel
tribes re-
duced.

Abubeker was too good a politician, not to foresee the disagreeable consequences, if this rebellion was suffered to gather strength. He instantly dispatched *Kaled*, who was a general remarkable for expedition, and for his hatred to all sects who differed from the *Moslems*, at the head of four thousand five hundred men, to chastise the rebels; which he accordingly did with great slaughter, and brought back to *Medina* an immense booty in effects and slaves. *Malec*, an *Arab* prince, famous for his skill in poetry and chivalry, and at that time at the head of another body of *Arabs* who refused to pay the tribute, seeing the fate of the other rebels, reverted to Islamism, and submitted himself to *Kaled*, with a tender of all that was demanded from him. But the barbarian, getting him in his power, struck off his head, which put an intire end to the rebellion in that part of *Arabia*. *Abubeker*, who was a strict justiciary, and far from being naturally cruel, would have put *Kaled* to death for this inhumanity, but was prevailed upon by *Omar* to spare him.

Moseilama
defeated
and slain.

Moseilama, the impostor we have mentioned, who was *Mahomet's* rival in his pretences to a divine mission, was still in the field, at the head of a great number of followers, in the province of *Yamama*, of which he had made himself sole master. *Abubeker* at first sent *Ackramah* and *Serjabil* against him, but they proving too weak, *Kaled* was ordered to join them

them with his victorious troops, by which the *Moslem* army amounted to forty thousand combatants. At first *Moseilama* defeated *Kaled*, with considerable loss. But the latter renewed his attack with so much vigour, that he dispersed the impostor's troops, and put him, with ten thousand of his followers, to the sword. About the same time, a separate body of rebel tribes were defeated at *Babeira*, by *Al' Ola*, another of *Abubeker's* generals, who killed great numbers of them, and returned to *Medina* with a vast booty. *Toleiah*, another rebel chief, and the head of the tribe of *Asad*, was next defeated by *Kaled*, and obliged to fly into *Syria*, where he remained till the next califat; when he submitted to turn *Mahometan*. Other rebels, particularly *Sejai*, a female prophetess, were, about the same time, reduced by *Abubeker*, and obliged to submit.

After this, matters being entirely quieted in *Arabia*, *Abubeker*, began to think of extending his conquests, and, in fact, when we consider him upon the whole, his genius seems to have been, in all respects, superior even to that of *Mahomet*. Twelve years of almost constant war had disciplined his subjects into the best troops in the world. The expences of his government were but very small, and the riches he received from his conquered and reduced dominions were immense. He saw the two people, the *Greeks* and the *Persians*, who only could oppose his progress to universal empire, declining from one degree of luxury to another. The *Greeks* were torn, divided, and weakened, by their mad and absurd disputes concerning religion; their emperor was hated by one party of his subjects, and disregarded by the other. The governors of his provinces were so many independent tyrants, who had no regard to their own or their master's honour; many of his provinces had forgot even the use of arms, and those who still retained any warlike dispositions, were too few to make head against the hardy *Arabs*. *Abubeker* was intirely sensible of the vast advantages he had, and resolved to improve them while his followers were yet warm with enthusiasm, and spirited on all sides by victory. *Osamar*, his favourite general, was, as we have already seen, but a young man, and *Kaled* in the vigour of his age, and both of them well fitted to head their troops in person, through the dangerous and difficult marches they were to undertake.

Revenge was natural, and held to be meritorious with those barbarians. *Osamar*, who had never laid aside his design of taking vengeance for his father's blood, made a most furious irruption into *Syria*, where, after killing the man who slew his father, he laid all waste with fire and sword in those parts, and returned in triumph to *Arabia*. This irruption, however, was only meant as an essay towards what might be done with a greater force, and *Abubeker*, finding by the report of *Osamar*, that the conquest of all *Syria* was practicable, summoned a meeting of all his chief subjects

Abubeker's views explained.

Character of the *Arab* generals.

They prepare to invade *Syria*.

at *Medina*, and acquainted them in the letters of summon that his intention was to take *Syria* out of the hands of the infidels, and that all wars, undertaken to propagate true religion, were acts of obedience to God. The appearance, in consequence of this summons, was extremely warlike, and numerous; and it required no great share of eloquence to persuade men, impelled at once by Enthusiasm and avarice, to attempt the conquest of the finest and the richest provinces on the earth, so that they all called out to be led into the field. They were at this time encamped upon the hills and grounds surrounding *Medina*, and the behaviour of *Abubeker* and his generals were such as is seldom to be paralleled in history. *Abu Obeidah* was appointed to advance first, with a body of twenty thousand men, towards the frontiers of *Syria*, and provisions growing scarce about *Medina*, the rest of the army under the command of *Yozid* set out soon after. They were attended to some distance from *Medina* by *Abubeker* himself on foot, after he had given them a solemn benediction, and prayed for their success, on the top of a hill, in full sight and hearing of them all. He then addressed his generals to inform them, that he knew no difference between themselves and him, with regard to exterior distinctions of grandeur, but that the service of God, and the propagation of true religion, was the aim of them all.

Abube.
ker's in-
structions
to his ge-
nerals.

Tho' this was a war both of religion and rapine, yet the instructions given by *Abubeker*, to his general *Yozid*, deserve for the most part to be faithfully transmitted, for their wisdom and humanity. "*Yozid*, said he" "treat thy soldiers with lenity and compassion. Upon all doubtful emergencies, take the opinion of your officers, and be sure to inspire them with courage and intrepidity, when they are before the face of an enemy. After you have gained a victory spare the aged, the women and children; cut not down palm trees, nor set fire to corn fields. Destroy not fruit trees, and slay no more cattle than are sufficient for the use of the army. Let your engagements be sacred, and spare all those religious persons, whom you shall find in sacred places, which you are likewise to spare. As to those imps of satan's synagogue who shave their crowns, you are to cleave their skulls, and put them to the sword, unless they consent either to pay tribute, or embrace our faith." It is perhaps not easy to determine, who are meant by those imps of satan, whom the califf seems to be so much incensed against. As ecclesiastical tonsure was beginning to be frequent about this time, he might mean either the *Romish* or the *Greek* monks, who often wandered about without any place of abode; or he might mean a particular sect of the *Jews*, whom the *Moslems* in general hated worse than they did the *Christians*. After giving those instructions the grand army proceeded on its march, and the califf returned to *Medina*.

The

The emperor *Heraclius* was not wanting to himself upon *They de-* so dangerous and so alarming an occasion. In a council of seat the his great men at *Damascus*, he reproached them for their im- *Greeks.* pieties, and put them in mind that they had now nothing but their own courage to trust to; and at the same time he ordered a strong body of men to observe the motions of the *Arabs*, who had now advanced as far as *Todun* in the neighbourhood of *Gaza*. A pretty smart engagement soon ensued, but greatly to the disadvantage of the *Greeks*, who lost twelve hundred men, while their enemies lost no more than one hundred and twenty. This skirmish was followed by many others, but nothing decisive happened, and *Abubeker* seemed about this time to have begun to be dissatisfied with *Yozid's* conduct. He had ordered the richest of the spoils, which his army made in their march, to be sent to himself, and he made such a display of them, at *Mecca* and other parts of his dominions, that he soon raised another army which he sent to support the first

Any prince, however, but one who ruled over a people *Abubeker* blindly devoted to his will, and to the cause for which they changes fought, might have been ruined by the conduct he observed his gene- on this occasion. For he ordered the command of his army rals, in *Syria*, to be taken from *Yozid*, and given to *Said*; with a set of instructions for his conduct. He, next, to please *Omar*, who seemed to disapprove of that choice, took the command from *Said*, and gave him orders to support *Abu Obeidah* in *Palestine*. *Said* gave a most exalted proof of obedience on this occasion, for when the califf's messenger, demanded the great standard, which was the badge of supreme command, he readily resigned it, saying, it was a matter of great indifference to him who received it, as he was determined to fight under it for the honour of the prophet, and the advancement of religion.

Kaled was all this time carrying on war with great success *Progress* in *Irak*, which answers to the antient *Babylonia*, and forms of *Kaled* the richest part of old *Persia*. This valuable country was in *Irak.* on the south bounded, by what are termed the deserts of *Irak*, and by part of *Arabia Deserta*. It had the deserts of *Syria* towards its west, it was bounded by *Mesopotamia* on the north, and by *Susanna* now called *Kugestan* on the east, and part of *Afyria* and *Media*. Notwithstanding the difficulty of penetrating into a country so situated, *Kaled* proved victorious wherever he marched, And *Mothama*, a general whom *Abubeker* had before sent into *Irak*, resigned to him the chief command. *Kaled* made so good a use of it, that he put the whole province of *Irak* under contribution, after defeating the natives in many battles. He made himself master of the great city of *Heira* the capital of a province so called. This kingdom had been established for six hundred and twenty two years under various princes, and was now governed by the *Mon-* *dars*, who held it under the kings of *Persia*, but the irresistible

ble *Kaled*, killed the *Mondar* in battle, with many thousands of his subjects, and carried off his son captive, with an immense booty. *Kaled*, besides overrunning the open country, and putting an end to the reign of the *Mondars*, made him master of *Anbar*, *Dowmat*, and *Al Fondal*, and in short to such a vast extent of rich territory, that the tribute, raised from *Irak*, amounted to a prodigious sum; and is said to have been the first that ever was paid into the califf's treasury at *Medina*.

Abu Obeidab de-
feated by
the *Greeks*

While *Kaled* was thus prosperous in *Irak*, the emperor *Heraclius* was making his utmost efforts to repel the invasion of the *Arabs*. With this view he assembled his army at *Gaza*, and attacked *Abu Obeidab* before, as it would seem, he was reinforced by the main army under *Amru*, so vigorously that the *Arabs* were defeated in *Palestine*. *Abu Obeidab's* defeat obliged the califf to order *Kaled*, to suspend his conquests in *Irak* and to take upon him the command of his army in *Palestine*, instead of *Abu Obeidab*, which *Kaled* accordingly did, and *Abu Obeidab* afterwards served cheerfully under him.

Kaled
made
com-
mander
in chief
of the
Moslems.

When *Kaled* came to take upon him his new command, he found things in great disorder, and that the *Moslem* army had been weakened, by a detachment of four thousand horse, under *Sejabil* against *Bostra* a city of immense wealth in *Syria Damascena*, and garrisoned by no fewer than twelve thousand horse. *Kaled* did not at all approve of this expedition, but he instantly made the best dispositions he could, either to support the siege, or to bring off *Sejabil*. The latter had to do with a cowardly governor of *Bostra*, whose name was *Romanus*, and who requested and obtained an interview with the *Arab*, at a small distance from *Bostra*. Upon *Romanus's* demanding the motive of *Sejabil's* invading his government, the latter frankly told him, that it was in order to force the inhabitants either to turn *Moslems*, or to pay tribute; and he mentioned several places, whom they had already reduced to that condition. *Romanus* struck with the appearance of *Sejabil* and the manner of his speaking, returned to *Bostra*, and proposed to the inhabitants to pay a tribute, and thereby get rid of the invaders. But the appearance and behaviour of the *Arabs*, instead of intimidating the *Bostrans*, rendered them desperate, and they resolved to defend the place to the last extremity. This resolution must have proved fatal to *Sejabil*, had it not been for the critical arrival of *Kaled*, who saved his troops from being cut to pieces, in a vigorous salley made by the *Bostrans*; who were with some difficulty driven back into the city by *Kaled*, and the body of troops he brought up with him.

He saves
an *Arab*
army.

Hej. 12

Kaled, daring as he was, was amazed at *Sejabil's* attempt, against so superior a force and so strong a place; and blamed both him and *Abu Obeidab* for it. *Kaled*, however, invested the place, and both *Sejabil* and he prayed in public, for success

cefs against the idolaters, (as they termed the christians,) Treach- and promised paradise to all the *Moslems*, who should fall in ery of a the attempt. The dispositions of *Kaled*, carried with them *Greek ge-* such a shew of resolution, and the terror of his name was neral. now become so great, that *Romanus* secretly made his peace with him, and promised both to deliver up the place, and to embrace *Islamism*. He secretly bargained, however, with *Kaled*, to fight him in a sham duel, that he might thereby have the greater credit with the garison. But whether *Ka-* *Bostra be-* *led* had already taken his measures so well that he thought trayed. they could not miscarry, or whether his mock way of fighting, proved too rough for *Romanus*, the latter is said to have very narrowly escaped being killed, when he fled back to the city: He there once more attempted to intimidate the inhabitants into a submission, but he was so far from succeeding that they stript him of his command, and bestowed it upon another general, which the emperor had sent with reinforcements to the city; and *Romanus* would have been put to death had it not been for the regard of the inhabitants to the emperor.

It appears from several circumstances, at this time, that Single du- the mean armour and simple weapons of the *Arabs*, inspired els. the *Greeks* with a notion, that they might be easily defeated in single combat. The new governor of *Bostra*, to give his troops the higher idea of his courage, drew them out in array against the *Arabs*, and challenged *Kaled* to fight him hand to hand. It is very possible the barbarian, as having the charge of the army, did not think it proper to venture his life upon every bravado, and therefore he gave leave to *Abd Alnaman* an active young *Arab*, but like his fellow soldiers, a thorough enthusiast in the cause of *Islamism*, to accept of the challenge. But when the combatants met in the face of both armies, the strength and address of the *Arab*, proved too hard for the *Greek*, who was obliged to the swift-ness of his horse for his escape. This encounter however brought on a general engagement, in which the *Arabs* cut in pieces a great part of the imperial army, with the loss of no more than two hundred and thirty of their own men. This victory was thought to be chiefly owing to the spirit of enthusiasm, which *Kaled* and *Sejabil* diffused thro' all their army immediately before the engagement.

Notwithstanding this defeat, *Bostra* might still have made *Bostra ta-* an obstinate defence, had it not been betrayed by *Romanus*. ken. This traitor, after his degradation, seems to have enjoyed some degree of liberty, if not of authority, in the city; and he once more found means to have an interview with *Kaled*. He demanded no more than one hundred men, under an active commander, whom he was to introduce by a private way, known only to himself, into the city, which he accordingly did. The party was commanded by *Abd Abraman*, and di-viding

viding themselves into four equal bodies, they rushed towards the gate, where *Kaled* with his whole army was to be admitted, as they accordingly were, and so general a carnage began, that even the unrelenting *Kaled* being touched with the miseries of the inhabitants, made use of his prophet's name and authority to put a stop to it. During this, the traitor *Romanus*, introduced *Abd Abraman* into the apartment of the governor, whom he acquainted, that he had brought his friend *Abd Abraman* with him to send him to hell. The governor attempted to escape, but *Abd Abraman* instantly put him to death, lest, as he said, he should escape a second time out of his hands. *Romanus* we are told embraced *Islamism*, but would have been torn to pieces by the *Bostrans*, to whom he boasted of his treachery, had he not been protected by *Kaled*.

The *Arabs*
march a-
gainst *Dama-*
scus.

Strength
of the
Moslems.

Damascus
defended.

The head rendezvous of the imperial army, continued all this time to be at *Gaza*, but the emperor himself was at *Antioch*, where he received the alarming news, that the *Arabs*, after reducing *Bostra*, were assembling all their troops into one body, to march against *Damascus*. Upon this, *Heraclius* dispatched one *Calens* at the head of a flying body of four thousand men, to observe the motions of the *arabs*, and to throw himself into *Damascus*. *Calens* having visited some posts, obeyed his orders; but the people of *Damascus* expressed great discontent and dismay, when he produced an order from the emperor, for taking upon himself the chief command in the place of *Izrail* their former governor, of whose abilities they had a great opinion. In the mean while, the whole *Moslem* army in those parts, being assembled under *Kaled*, consisted of no more than forty five thousand five hundred men. The barbarian well knowing that the fate of all *Syria* must follow that of *Damascus*, which was then one of the largest and finest cities in the world, and termed the earthly paradise, marched directly to form the siege of it, after leaving a garison in *Bostra*.

The inhabitants of *Damascus*, notwithstanding their divisions, did not sacrifice their city to their enthusiastic assailants. They had the strongest assurances of the emperor's sending one hundred thousand men to their relief, and upon *Kaled's* drawing near to *Damascus*, he found all the strong posts about the city, occupied by the besieged, who were drawn up in excellent order. Notwithstanding this, *Derar* an *Arab* of prodigious strength and intrepidity, with, if possible, a stronger hatred for the christians, than even *Kaled* had, and *Abd Abraman*, attacked their army, with such fury, that *Derar* killed with his own hand four horsemen, but the *Arabs* were repelled with loss, in all their repeated attacks, which so greatly incensed *Kaled* that he challenged any man in the christian army to fight him in single combat. His challenge was accepted of, first by *Calons*, and then by *Izrail*, but both them were defeated, taken prisoners, and put

to death by *Kaled*, for refusing to embrace *Islamism*. We are told upon this occasion that *Kaled* played upon *Izrail's* name, which is the same with that of the angel of death among the *Arabs*, and told him as he was going to death, that his namesake was waiting for him, and ready to carry his soul to hell. He afterwards ordered the heads of both governors to be thrown into the place.

This inhumanity had not the designed effect; the inhabitants thought, they had nothing but a general butchery to expect from such conquerors, and therefore attacked them with great courage in several sallies. This served in like manner to increase the fierceness for desire of revenge in the barbarians, who repulsed the besieged on all occasions, and at last shut them up within the walls of the city. The inhabitants finding this, at last proposed an accommodation, and offered to *Kaled* one thousand ounces of gold, and two thousand silk vestments if he would raise the siege, but he absolutely rejected the offer, tho' certain intelligence was now come to his camp, that the emperor's army to the number of one hundred thousand men were advancing to relieve the place. Upon this a council of war composed of the principal officers, was held, in which *Kaled* and *Abu Obeidah* differed in opinion. The former giving way to his natural impetuosity, was for marching directly and fighting the imperial troops, and in case of defeating them, he thought that *Damascus* must in course surrender or be taken. *Abu Obeidah*, on the other hand, was a man of sound judgement and great experience in war, and tho' at this time he seems to have acted only as second in command, yet his opinion had great weight both in the court and in the army. He had in him great sentiments of humanity and virtue and was perhaps the politest *Arab* of his time. It was no wonder if two tempers so directly opposite should differ on this occasion. *Abu Obeidah* thought that the taking of *Damascus* was the great object of their operations, and that by their drawing the whole of their army off from the siege to fight the imperialists, the inhabitants would easily find means to get provisions and reinforcements, by which the *Moslem* army when weakened by a battle, might find it impracticable to take the place, whereas, by continuing the siege, it might be taken before the imperialists could arrive to relieve it.

Opinions thus clashing, a medium was found, when by the extraordinary marks of the rejoicing which the besiegers observed in the place, it became certain that the imperial army was at hand. It was therefore resolved to detach *Derar* an excellent officer, but exceeding even *Kaled* himself in ferocity, and forwardness to fight, with a body of troops, to harass the imperialists, and to distress them by cutting off their convoys, and foraging parties. *Kaled* was so sensible of *Derar's* failing, that he cautioned him against too much impetuosity, or fighting too great superiority of numbers, and enjoined him by all means, if he found himself likely

to be overpowered to retire to the main army. *Werdan* the imperial general was by this time advancing to give battle to the *Moslems*. But *Derar* unable to contain himself at the sight of an enemy, and forgetting all *Kaled's* instructions, immediately charged the imperialists, being seconded by *Rafi*, an enthusiast like himself, who proclaimed paradise to all who should die in the cause, and disgrace and death to all who should desert it. Their charge was so furious, that *Derar* killed an imperialist by *Werdon's* side, together with the standard bearer as he was carrying off the standard, which was very rich and magnificent. In short the whole imperial army, was beginning to fall into disorder, when they were reanimated by the arrival of ten thousand men under the command of *Werdon's* son, the governor under his father, of *Hems* or *Emesa*, a city situated between *Alleppo* and *Damascus*, being at the distance of five days journey from each.

This reinforcement changed the fortune of the day; the *Moslems* were obliged to retreat, and *Derar* had penetrated so far amongst the enemy, that he was taken prisoner. *Rafi* however, continued to animate the *Moslems*, with so much success, that they renewed the charge, and stood their ground till *Kaled*, who had been apprised of their danger, came up with the main body of the army to their relief, leaving *Abu Obeidah* with some troops to continue the siege, and to repel the sallies of the garison. Upon the arrival of this tremendous general, the imperialists were struck with consternation; many of them, especially those who had come from *Hems*, joined with the *Arabs*, and the rest were put to the rout. In the mean while, *Kaled*, who highly valued *Derar*, understanding that *Werdon* had sent him off prisoner, and that he was on the road to *Hems*, where he was to be presented to the emperor, dispatched a body of light horse, who overtook and defeated the party that was guarding *Derar*, and brought him back to the *Moslem* army.

Gain a victory but are again repulsed.

This defeat however shameful it might have been to the imperialists, does not appear to have been very bloody, for we find they, in a few days after, assembled to the number of seventy thousand fighting men at *Ajadin* a city, but a small way from *Damascus*, and after some consultation, they resolved again to attempt to raise the siege. Upon this, *Kaled* sent for all the men that could be spared from the reinforcements, that had arrived at *Palestine*, *Irak*, and other conquered places, and *Abu Obeidah* himself was obliged to agree to his opinion, for hazarding a battle, and accordingly the *Moslem* army was put in full march towards *Ajuadin*, *Abu Obeidah* being left to command the rear.

The *Moslems* reassemble their army

The incidents and adventures which happened upon this occasion, would be thought too bold for fiction, and too improbable for romance itself, were it not attested by unquestionable authorities. For, as *Abu Obeidah* had foreseen, no sooner was the main body of the *Moslem* army in motion than the

the besieged made a sally in two divisions, one of horse under a general called *Paul*, and one under another called *Peter* and attacked the rear of the *Arabs* under *Abu Obeidah*, with so much vigour that it was thrown into confusion. But this advantage, which might have been decisive in favour of the imperialists, was lost by the lust and avarice of *Peter*. For finding *Abu Obeidah's* men giving way, instead of improving the victory, he detached himself from the cavalry, and seized upon the women, the children, and the effects of the *Arabs*, by which he left *Paul's* cavalry unsupported. *Kaled* being apprized of *Abu Obeidah's* danger, immediately put himself at the head of eight thousand horse, and advanced with such expedition that he cut in pieces all the *Greek* cavalry, and made *Paul* their general prisoner, his head being soon after struck off for refusing to turn *Mahometan*. who are taken prisoners but rescued by *Kaled*.

In the mean while, the *Arah* women being too weak to resist *Peter*, were obliged to submit to be his captives. Tho' they marched in the rear, with the children, and the baggage, yet in a day of battle many of them, being armed, were as bold, resolute, and serviceable, as the best men in the *Moslem* army. In short, they greatly pertook of the character of their men. Inspired with equal enthusiasm, and fierceness, they had equal address in arms, they were equally active, and many of them equally vigorous. They are, to this day in general, celebrated for their beauty, and notwithstanding their mistaken notions in religion, for their virtue. Amongst others who were made captives on this occasion, *Kaula*, was the sister of *Derar*, whose charms so captivated *Peter*, that he made her some immodest proposals. Tho' *Kaula* had been obliged to part with her liberty, she could not be persuaded to give up her honour, and purchased *Peter's* absence for a while by not discovering any violent dislike to his addresses.

She made use of this interval, in assembling the other female captives of her country, and having represented the danger her virtue was in, and that they were all liable to the like insults, they came to a generous resolution of dying rather than submit to him. Amongst the heroines who were most forward on this occasion, was one *Oseira*, and finding themselves destitute of other weapons, they resolved to make use of their tent poles in defending themselves. They then threw themselves into a ring and each arming herself with a tent pole, they stood upon their guard with incredible resolution. *Peter* alarmed with the account of this insurrection, flew at the head of a party to suppress it, but met with so warm a reception, that the most forward of his officers and soldiers were laid upon the ground, and the rest kept without the reach of the poles. *Peter* who had not expected such a resistance, tried next what persuasion and expostulation could do, but he was answered with nothing but expressions of defiance and detestation. Provoked at this, he brought up more troops, but finding all was ineffectual, for making the ladies

Braveconduct of the Arab ladies.

A GENERAL HISTORY

ladies resign their tent poles, he felt no other passion but resentment, and with an unmanly brutality, he ordered his soldiers to fall on, and give them no quarter.

The dispute was very unequal between a few scores of women, and some thousands of soldiers. The former however, continued to behave with the most undaunted resolution, when *Kaled* was informed of their danger, and flew to their relief, at the head of four thousand horse, just as they were ready to sink under the swords of their enemies. They must have done so before, had not *Kaula*, who knew her brother *Derar* from afar, reanimated their fainting vigour, with the hopes of speedy relief, and they soon had the satisfaction of seeing three thousand of their assailants, with their late ungenerous tyrant *Peter*, put to the sword by *Kaled*, and *Derar*, while those who survived were driven back to *Damascus*.

The
Greeks de-
feated in
a general
engage-
ment and

The *Arabs* under *Kaled*, had no time to spend in mutual congratulations, upon this glorious atchievement. The army of *Werdon* continued still unbroken, and *Abu Obeidah* who commanded in *Kaled's* absence, was in danger of being attacked. *Kaled* and *Derar*, therefore with their detachment, instantly rejoined their main army, being attended by the brave heroines, who at this time, nobly paid the debt of gratitude for their deliverance. The troops under *Werdon* were still seventy thousand, a number far superior to that of the *Arabs*, who had suffered so greatly by their fatigues and encounters, that it required the utmost efforts of enthusiasm in themselves and their leaders, to keep up their spirits, when they beheld the vast superiority of the enemy. But *Kaled*, and the other *Arab* chiefs, who, by repeated experience, had been taught to despise the courage and discipline of the *Greeks*, were so far from being alarmed at their numbers, that they resolved to give them battle, and made the proper dispositions for that purpose. It proved fatal to the Christians, whose general *Werdon* was slain, as is said (with some very improbable circumstances) by *Derar*, and fifty thousand of his soldiers were put to the sword. We have given none of the marvellous accounts, with which the fruitful brains of the *Arab* writers have embellished this victory, but only the substance of it which the event proves to be indisputably true. 'Tis' likewise confirmed by the Christian writers of those times.

lose fifty
thousand
men.

The booty made by the *Arabs* in all kind of costly arms, crosses and chains of gold and silver, banners and precious stones, was immense. But *Kaled* wisely put off the division of the spoil which was carried into one common stock, till the reduction of *Damascus*. The most extraordinary circumstance attending this victory, was that it cost the *Arabs*, only four hundred and seventy four men. As it was, more important than any they had yet gained, *Kaled* did not fail to inform the califf of it, by an epistle which, as it is come to our hands is pithy yet pompous; there is however we think some reason

reason for believing that the letter itself is the composition of *Kaled* in the historian. But whatever may be in this, which is not a forms the very material conjecture, the califf received the news with califf of sensible marks of joy and devotion, and after consulting his success with the chief men of his court, he ordered a strong reinforcement to be sent to *Kaled*, under *Amru* and *Malec* to enable him to continue the siege of *Damascus*, and to reduce the other cities of that country. This the califf was the more enabled to do, as all the *Arab* tribes, particularly the *Koreish*, were now extremely forward to share in the spoils and glory of the expedition.

Kaled accordingly a second time formed the siege of *Da-* He again *mascus*, and assigned the generals under him the proper posts besieges round the city, while *Derar* was ordered to scour the neigh- *Damascus* bourhood with a flying party of two thousand horse, to prevent the excursions of the garison. The route of the *Greeks* at the late battle of *Ajnadin*, had reinforced the garison by fugitives from that defeat, so that they were enabled to make a sally, at first, with great appearance of success. The battle continued the whole day with great loss on both sides, but the *Arabs* at last forced their enemies to retire once more into the city. After this, *Kaled* sent to his principal officers, a letter he had received in answer to his from the califf, which was read by them with great joy and satisfaction especially as they expected every hour that the town would surrender.

But the garison and inhabitants had now put themselves which is under the command of one *Thomas*, of whom we know very bravely little more than he was a man of extraordinary courage defended strength and abilities in war. We are told by one of the *by Thomas* *Moslem* writers, that he was the emperor's son in-law, and that at first he had no command in the garison, by which it is probable he had fled thither after the battle of *Ajnadin*. The high opinion, the *Damascenes* had of this new general, was such, that they resolved to hazard another sally under his command, and he made a proper disposition of their defences to favour it. It appears that at this time the *Arabs* had advanced their posts so near the city, that they were preparing to give it a general assault, but *Thomas* dislodged them, with vast loss on their side, and performed prodigies of valour with his own hand. Amongst many others whom he killed was *Aban*, who had very lately been married to one of his countrywomen, and she was fighting by his side at the time of his death. She did not however vent her grief, in useless exclamations, for she directed an arrow so happily against the chief standard bearer of the christians, that it struck him on the hand, and dropping the standard it was seized by *Ser-jabil*, and the *Arabs* immediately considered it as a pledge of victory. While *Thomas* was making incredible efforts to re- who is cover his standard, *Aban's* widow, who had never lost sight wounded of the object of her revenge, wounded him in the eye with by an an *Arab* lady

and obliged another arrow, which obliged him to order a retreat. Th
ed to re-effected, but with some loss, under the protection of th
tire engines placed on the walls, which did great executio
among the *Arabs*.

Fresh sally *Thomas*, attributing his repulse to the accident of his be
by *Tho-* ing wounded, ordered his wound to be dressed, and prepared
mas, for a sally, more vigorous than any of the former, ordering
the *Arabs* to be attacked from all the gates at once. He was
as before, attended at first with success. He forced in perfor
the post where *Serjabil* commanded, and would have taken
him prisoner, had he not been saved by the interposition o
a body of *Arab* horse, under the command of *Abd Abaman*
and *Othman*. In the mean time, *Abu Obeidah*, had the good
fortune to surround that body which had issued from the
gate before which he commanded, and cut every man of
them off; and the *Greeks* losing ground in all other quarters,
who is re- they at last retired, with great loss, into the city.
pulsed.

Though the defence which the *Damascenes* had hitherto
made against their besiegers, was extraordinary in that age
and country, yet repeated repulses, discouraged them so
much, that the principal inhabitants and their clergy, re-
solved to treat of a surrender, and even proposed the same
to *Thomas*. All that general could do, was to prevail with
them to delay it, till he could learn what relief they were to
expect from the emperor. But this required a longer time
than the despondency, and the danger of the inhabitants
could bear. For some of the troops proposed to treat with
Kaled, provided he would grant them a suspension of arms,
till the capitulation could be settled. The barbarian, ex-
asperated by the length of the siege, and in hopes of gra-
tifying at once his cruelty and his avarice, by taking the
place by storm, refused to discontinue his attacks, or to
listen to any terms, but those of surrendering at discretion,
which was the same thing as death to the *Greeks* if they did not
immediately turn Mahometans.

The *Da-*
mascenes
treat of a
surrender
to *Abu-*
Obeidah.

The inhabitants, who, by this time, seem to have been
no strangers to the religion and character of the *Moslems*,
driven to despair by the brutality of *Kaled*, applied to *Abu*
Obeidah, and, upon their promising, as a preliminary, to
surrender the place, and pay tribute to the califf, *Abu Obe-*
idah sent one of his principal officers into the city to settle
the capitulation. Upon this, occasion the *Greek* de-
puties demanded of the officer, whether he had been one of
Mahomet's companions, intimating thereby, that if he
was, they should have the greater reliance upon him for
fulfilling the terms to be agreed on. The officer an-
swered, that he had been a companion to the prophet, but
“that they might equally trust to the honour of the meanest
Moslem who believed the *Koran*, as to his.” Some difficul-
ties occurring, the deputies, to the number of a hundred,
repaired to *Abu Obeidah's* quarter, and he received them with
great

great civility. All, however, they could obtain from him, in point of religion, was, that they should keep possession of several of their churches. But he would not put his name to the instrument that contained this or any other concession he might give them, because he was not commander in chief of the *Moslem* army. But this difficulty was got over, hostages were given by the inhabitants, and a detachment of a hundred *Arabs* took possession of part of the town.

While the inhabitants were thus treating with *Abu Obeidah*, one *Josiah*, a *Greek* priest, wanting to make advantage of the distresses of his country, and fearing to lose his opportunity should the capitulation take place, repaired privately to *Kaled*, who, exasperated by the death of a friend that had been just killed from the walls, was preparing to storm the city by a general assault. He introduced himself by applying to the barbarian's ruling passion, and telling him, that the prophet *Daniel*, having foretold the greatness of the *Moslem* empire, he was ready (upon him and his family being taken into his, *Kaled's*, protection) to introduce a party of his men into the city. As no conditions were required, *Kaled* immediately ordered a detachment of his best troops to follow the priest, and as the garrison trusted, no doubt, to their capitulation with *Abu Obeidah*, they found an easy admittance into the city, and opening the gates to the rest of *Kaled's* division, a great number of the citizens were put to the sword. They who escaped fled to *St. Mary's* church, where *Obeidah* with his party, had, by this time, taken post. Coming up to *Kaled*, he told him, "that God had been sparing of the blood of believers, by putting the city into his hands, without the trouble of fighting." This was what *Kaled* not having foreseen (and, indeed, *Abu Obeidah* seems very wisely to have concealed from him the whole of the transaction) he appeared greatly incensed and provoked at the disrespect offered to his character, by concluding an affair of so much importance without consulting him, and appeared resolved to put the citizens to the sword and plunder the city.

Abu Obeidah, who was joined by the most considerable amongst the officers, on the other hand, maintained the wisdom and authority of the capitulation he had made, and put *Kaled* in mind how necessary it was to spare their army, considering the great number of strong places they had yet to reduce; which would hold out to all extremities, if the *Moslems* should break their faith in this capitulation. *Kaled* at last was appeased, and upon considering the matter, he agreed to submit the whole to the califf's decision; and till that could be known, each general was to keep that part of the city he was in possession of, and all the surviving inhabitants, even *Thomas* and *Herbis* their leaders, should enjoy the benefit of the capitulation.

Difference
between
him and
Abu Obeidah.

Terms of the capi- Amongst the other articles agreed on by *Abu Obeidah*, one tulation. was, that as many of the inhabitants as chose it, might retire to what place they thought proper, with all their effects. This article struck *Kaled* to the heart, and when he agreed to it, it was with an express limitation of place and time; the first to be confined to the territories conquered by the *Moslems*, and the latter to three days; and he declared, that after the expiration of three days, if he found them in the imperial dominions, he would treat them as enemies. The *Damascenes* accepted, or were forced to accept, of those conditions, and packing up their effects, which were extremely valuable, particularly a wardrobe belonging to the emperor, consisting of three hundred loads of silks, and cloths of gold, they set out from *Damascus*, being furnished by the *Arabs* with some provisions and arms. *Derar* could not see so valuable a booty escape without reproaching those who had made the capitulation, but he was silenced by other officers of more weight and authority, who quoted the authority of the *Koran* in favour of mercy, and extolled the lenity and wise conduct of *Abu Obeidah*.

Expedi-
tion of
Kaled.
History of
Jonas.

Upon the *Damascenes* leaving their city, *Kaled* projected one of the boldest and most difficult attempts that ever succeeded, and we are told, not improbably, that it was suggested to him by one *Jonas*, an apostate Christian, who, having been made a captive in a sally, by the *Moslems*, had, to save his life, embraced their religion. He was a man of high reputation and quality, and had been lately married to a lady of whom he was passionately fond, but who, disclaiming him for his apostacy, had refused to cohabit with him, and chose to leave *Damascus* with her other friends.

This circumstance, though not observed by historians, deserves particular attention, as being a strong evidence how scrupulous the *Moslems* were in observing their capitulation. It would, at this time, admit of a doubt, whether a wife under the same circumstances with the wife of *Jonas*, after her husband had recovered possession of her, could have it in her choice to leave him, and, without his consent, to claim the benefit of the capitulation; add to this, that nothing could be more detestable in the eyes of the *Moslems*, than the cause assigned by this lady for leaving her husband. But, notwithstanding all the address and remonstrances of *Jonas*, which we may well suppose to have been extremely tender and passionate, she was considered as being entitled to the benefit of the capitulation, and enjoyed it accordingly.

The *Arabs*
pursue the
Dama-
scenes.

Love, hatred, and avarice thus co-operating, *Kaled* formed the desperate resolution of setting out, the fourth day after the departure of the *Damascenes*, with a party of horse, attended by *Jonas*, who knew the country, in pursuit of the *Damascenes*, who had left the city; and every thing relating to the march was left to *Jonas*, by whose advice the pursuing party, which consisted of only four thousand horse, was dressed

dress as Christian *Arabs*, the better to prevent any alarm in the country through which they were to march.

It may be proper here to observe, that the emperor *Heraclius*, had some time before taken into his pay a body of such *Arabs*, and had sent them to be employed in defending *Damascus*, but through some misunderstanding between them and the governor, whom Christian writers call *Mansur*, they had been dismissed from that service; and many of them at this time, very probably, were roving about the country, which might greatly contribute to *Kaled's* success.

Whatever may be in this, it is certain, that the Barbarian, after he and his party had surmounted infinite difficulties and dangers, were conducted by *Jonas* to the spot where the unhappy exiles were reposing and refreshing themselves. It is represented to have been a meadow near *Laodicea*, and their numbers to have been about ten thousand fighting men, besides women and children. *Kaled* drew up his men in four divisions, commanded by himself, *Derar*, *Rafi*, and *Abdalraman*, he leading the attack. The *Damascenes*, on the other hand, either taking them to be friendly *Arabs*, or confiding in their own numbers, did not seem to decline the combat; and finding who their enemies were, drew up in two divisions, one commanded by *Thomas*, the other by *Herbi*. But the attack of *Kaled* and his officers was irresistible; *Thomas* and *Herbi*, the two leaders of the *Greeks* were killed, their followers were cut in pieces, and the defeat of the *Damascenes* was so compleat, that not a soul of them escaped either slaughter or captivity, excepting one wretch, who had betrayed the person of *Herbi* to his enemy.

Amongst the captives made on this occasion was the daughter of the emperor, wife to *Thomas*, a princess of exquisite beauty, and so undaunted in resolution, that she killed the horse of *Rafi*, who obliged her to surrender. In short, none but the women and children received quarter. The wife of *Jonas* continued to have so invincible a detestation of his apostacy, that having now no capitulation to protect her, she stabbed herself to the heart, rather than be obliged to cohabit with him again. As the conduct and courage of *Jonas*, during the whole of the expedition, had endeared him to all the *Moslems*, *Rafi*, by a strain of unparalleled generosity, made him a present of the *Greek* princess, now the widow of *Thomas*, for a wife, in room of her he had lost, with all the immense treasure in diamonds and jewels she had about her. But the heart of *Jonas* was susceptible of passion only for one; he nobly accepted the present, that he might have it the more in his power to send the lady, untouched, protected, and unransomed, to her father, with all her effects, which she accordingly was. This generous proceeding touched even the heart of *Kaled*, and when the vast booty they had taken was divided at *Damascus*, that barbarian, thinking that perhaps the *Greek* princess had not charms

and cut
them all
to pieces.

Generosity and noble affection of
Jonas,

who returns the emperor's daughter without ransom.

that suited the fancy of *Jonas*, presented him with a large sum out of the plunder, to enable him to buy a wife more to his liking. But *Jonas*, though he took the money, declared he was resolved to reserve his caresses for the black-eyed virgins, who, according to the *Moslem* faith, solace believers in the next world, and it is said, continued ever after a widower, and true to his former passion.

The *Koran*.

Abubeker was, during the time all those glorious conquests were making, at *Medina*, and busied in carrying into execution the great designs which *Mahomet* had left unfinished. That impostor, as we have already hinted, had produced passages of the *Koran* only to serve occasional purposes, so that at the time of his death it was a crude, indigested, mass of sayings, without any dependence upon, or connection with, one another. Some of those passages were written upon the skins of wild beasts, perhaps a kind of parchment, others upon the leaves and barks of trees; some were transcribed into books upon paper, and others were remembered by those to whom the prophet had delivered them. *Abubeker* saw that the application of the passages of the *Koran*, would serve him in as good stead as they had served his predecessor, and that the wild ungovernable spirits of his subjects could be kept under by no other consideration but the profound veneration they entertained for those sacred writings, as they deemed them. He therefore applied himself most assiduously to collect and transcribe all the scattered remains of the pretended revelations into one body. In this he was assisted, not only by the most zealous of the *Moslems*, but by the surviving wives of the prophet, and the amanuenses he had employed. Of the latter he had many, but with all the assistance he could obtain, the collections which *Abubeker* was enabled to make, of the *Koran*, were very imperfect; nor does it to this day appear, that it has been transmitted genuine to his followers. *Abubeker*, and the first califfs, were obliged to play over a great part of the prophet's game, and undoubtedly produced occasional scraps, which they inserted in the *Koran*, to justify their own conduct. This indeed was necessary, nor did *Abubeker* himself venture to publish it; but entrusted the copy with *Hafsa*, one of *Mahomet*'s wives, and daughter to *Omar*. It seems, however, to be certain, that other followers of *Mahomet*, besides *Abubeker*, had employed themselves in collecting passages of the *Koran*. For, though we are told, that the copy deposited with *Hafsa*, was not published till the reign of *Othman*, yet several copies of it were handed about even in *Abubeker*'s lifetime; and this might be the reason, why *Othman*, and the succeeding califfs, published it at all. It is not the intention of this history, to enter into any discussion of the doctrine and tenets of the *Koran*; enough has been said of it to convince an unprejudiced reader, that it consists of absurd effusions, and that the sublime, which some people pretend to find in it,

The *Koran* published.

it,

it, is no other than the effect, either of an over-heated imagination, or an artful disguise, which, because it is dark, is thought to have a meaning.

Abubeker, after being raised to the califat, seems never to have taken the field in person, and to have been chiefly employed at home, in preparing the *Koran*. The taking of *Damascus* was the capital action of his reign, and he is said to have died on the very day it happened. Different accounts are given of the cause of his death; some affirm, that he was poisoned by the *Jews*, and others, that he was carried off by a fever, which he contracted by bathing himself, when the weather was very cold. Finding his end approach, he ordered *Omar* to officiate for him in the *Mosque*, which was a kind of indirect nomination of him for his successor; but, lest that should not be sufficient, he appointed him such by his will, which was drawn up by *Othman*. He was, at the time of his death, about sixty-three years of age, and enough has been said of him, to prove him to be a prince of great wisdom and virtues.

Death of
Abubeker.

The reign of Omar, the second califf.

O M A R expressed great reluctance to take upon him the califat; he pretended, and with some reason, to be deterred by the difficulty of coming up to the virtues, and the noble disinterestedness of his great predecessor, whose whole effects did not amount to above twenty shillings sterling. *Omar* *Omar*, however, at last, accepted of the califat, and began to exercise his authority, by praying and preaching to the people. His succession was very pacific, and he was the first whom the *Moslems* honoured with the title of commander or emperor of the faithful. One of the first exercises of his power, was to condemn the conduct of his general, *Kaled*, with regard to the *Damascenes*. Both he and *Abu Obeidah* had submitted their differences to *Abubeker*, but the letters they wrote coming too late to find him alive, *Omar* decided them, and publicly intimated his intention to give the command of his army to *Abu Obeidah*. This startled many of the *Moslems*, who had been witnesses of *Kaled's* valour, and of the prodigious success that had attended him; and it was even hinted to *Omar*, that *Abubeker* had never ventured to take the command from *Kaled*, whom he considered, as a sword that was drawn in the defence of religion. Notwithstanding this, *Omar* seems to have considered *Kaled* in the light of a fortunate madman, and that his conduct was far from being warrantable, by his success. He thought him

Omar
raised to
the califat.

He gives
the com-
mand of
the army
to *Abu*
Obeidah.

Hej. 13.

Kaled's
resigna-
tion.Progress
of the
Moslems
in Persia.The
queen,
Nak, de-
posed and
murdered.

unjust as well as cruel, and that he harrassed his troops too much. He therefore persisted in his resolution of taking the command from *Kaled*, and giving it to *Abu Obeidah*, whose commission he accordingly signed. He then formally condemned *Kaled's* conduct in the affair of the *Koran* in dispute between him and *Abu Obeidah*, to whom he wrote a letter of good advice. This letter was sent to *Damascus*, where it was publicly read by *Shaddad* and *Amru*, the former of whom was appointed governor of that city. As to *Kaled*, his behaviour upon *Abu Obeidah's* taking possession of his new dignity, was magnanimous beyond expression; for he swore, that though, of all mankind, he hated *Omar* the most, yet as it had been the will of God to raise him to the califat, he would obey him the same as he did *Abubeker*. He then cheerfully resigned his command to *Abu Obeidah*, and served under him with the utmost fidelity and alacrity.

Omar now resumed the thoughts of conquering *Irack* or *Persia*, and sent *Abu Obeid*, *Mothanna*, *Amru*, and *Salit*, to make an irruption, at the head of one thousand horse, probably with a view of reconnoitring the country. But *Abu Obeid*, advancing too far, was defeated and killed by the *Persians*. *Mothanna*, however, who succeeded him in command, made an orderly retreat, and kept his ground within his camp at *Thalabiya*, a small town on the confines of *Syria*, till he received a reinforcement from the califf, under the command of *Jarir*, by which he was enabled to advance to *Dir Hind*, and to lay waste all the country upon the borders of the *Euphrates*. According to the *Moslem* authors, *Irak* was at that time governed by a queen, called *Artzemidocta*, who opposed the *Arabs*, with a body of twelve thousand horse, commanded by her general *Mabran*. Both armies came to an engagement near *Hira*, and after an obstinate dispute, *Mothanna* having, with his own hand, killed the *Persian* general, the *Arabs* remained victorious, though greatly weakened, and unable to pursue their adversaries, who retired to *Madayen*, a town situated on the *Tygris*, about fifteen miles distant from the famous city of *Bagdad*.

This disgrace upon the *Persian* arms, inflicted by the hands of a few despicable troops, as the *Persians* thought them, exasperated them so much, that they deposed their queen, who was soon after put to death; and was succeeded by *Yazdejerd*, the last of the ancient blood of the *Persian* kings. He was not, however, more fortunate than his predecessor; his general *Rustam*, at the head of a powerful army, was defeated by *Mothanna*, and *Abu Musa*, another *Arab* commander, conquered *Harzaman*, another *Persian* general, who likewise lost his life. Here the reader is to observe, that though those circumstances, in the main are true, yet the

the relation we have of them, both from the *Persian* and *Moslem* authors, is dark and confused, nor indeed is it easy to ascertain whether they happened in this or the preceeding califat.

Soon after, we find one *Said* at the head of *Omar*'s troops, in the neighbourhood of the *Euphrates*, and under him, the *Arabs*, as usual, performed wonders. The *Persian* general, tho' commanding thirty thousand men, was defeated, but not without a bloody engagement, in which the *Moslem* army, which consisted of no more than twelve thousand men, was critically reinforced by six thousand fresh troops, from which the battle is, by the *Arabs*, called, "the day of succours." After this, the *Moslem* army receiving new reinforcements, amounting to thirty thousand men, engaged the *Persians*, whose army we are told, was composed of one hundred and twenty thousand men, near the city of *Kadesia*.

The battle, according to the best accounts, was one of the most bloody that ever was fought, and lasted three days, but the event was decisive of the fate of *Persia* no fewer than sixty thousand *Persians* lying dead on the field of battle; and about eight thousand *Arabs*. It appears, however, that the success of the *Moslems* was greatly owing to the vast progress which Mahometanism had made, by this time, among the *Persians*, for we are told that *Hormazan*, the governor of *Kuzestan*, turned Mahometan, and surrendered that province to the califf, the rest of the *Persians* following his example, while their king *Yazdegerd*, was obliged to fly, and was stript of all his treasures; his capital city falling into the hands of the califf.

The *Moslems* victorious at the battle of *Kadesia*,

These successes would appear incredible, were it not, we are certain, that that fine country was conquered by the *Arabs*, and indeed, to men like them, no difficulties were insurmountable. As a proof of this, we need but mention their adventure at a monastery called *Kodos*, situated between *Tripoli* and *Harran*, about two days journey from *Damascus*.

In this monastery lived a priest of such sanctity and purity of manners, that he was resorted to by all ranks and degrees, of men and women, from all quarters, especially at *Easter*. No young married couple thought their happiness complete till they received his benediction, and all the neighbourhood of his monastery, during the *Easter* holidays, which the *Greeks* in those days held in vast veneration, was covered with booths in the nature of a fair, where all kind of rich stuffs and commodities were exposed to sale. Soon after the reduction of *Damascus*, *Abu Obeidah* had intelligence of this noble booty, and he immediately formed a scheme for becoming master of it. It happened about this time that the prefect of *Tripoly*'s daughter, having been married to a person of great eminence, had, with her bridegroom, repaired to the monastery, to receive the holy father's benediction,

and, to protect her from insult, she was guarded by a convoy of six thousand regular troops, and the company belonging to the fair besides, consisting of *Jews, Armenians, Copts*, and the like, amounting to about ten thousand men more.

where
they suc-
ceed

with great
difficulty.

Their vast
plunder.

A Christian, instigated by the hopes of sharing plunder, informed *Abu Obeidah* of the time and place where this fair was held; and offered to conduct any body of men he should appoint, to the monastery. He seems, however, to have been ignorant, as well as *Abu Obeidah* was, of the difficulty of the undertaking. No more than five hundred horse were appointed under *Abdallah* to carry it into execution. They marched with such secrecy, that they arrived under cloud of night, undiscovered in sight of the monastery, and they soon received intelligence of the strength they had to encounter. But nothing could daunt the *Arabs*, when in sight of their prey and plunder. *Abdallah* swore to his men that he would lose his life or possess the Christian spoils, and that paradise was under the shadow of their swords. In the morning, when the fair was opened, the Christians were attacked by *Abdallah* with such fury, that many of them were put to the sword, and all the goods in the fair were in danger of being carried off. But when they found what a despicable number the *Arabs* were, they closed them in on every side, and would have put them all to death, had not *Abdallah* forced his way through the enemy, and posted to *Damascus* for succours. *Kaled*, upon *Abu Obeidah*'s application, readily undertook the service, and arming himself with a shirt of mail, which he had stript the false prophet *Moseilama* of, and a cap that had been blessed by *Mahomet*, he instantly marched, at the head of a body of cavalry, and came to *Kodos*, with such expedition, that he saved the remains of *Abdallah*'s party, who were sinking under the number and weight of their enemies, from being cut to pieces, and obtained a complete victory over the Christians, in which he was greatly assisted by his faithful companion *Derar*, who killed the governor of *Tripoli*, the father of the young bride. In short, the conquest made by the *Arabs* was complete; most of the Christians, amongst whom was the bride herself, were taken prisoners; and the *Arabs* made themselves masters of the whole merchandizes and effects of the fair, which amounted to an immense sum. We are told, however, that the holy priest was spared by *Kaled*, who informed him he would have put him to a cruel death, had he not been forbidden by the apostle of God to imbrue his hands in his blood. Amongst other particulars of this valuable booty, we are told of a garment most curiously wrought with the effigies of *Jesus Christ*. This, no doubt, was in imitation of those handkerchiefs which were said to belong to *Veronica*; and of which so bad a use was afterwards made, both by the *Latin* and the *Greek* church. The truth is, the luxury and degeneracy of

of the *Greeks*, at this time was as shameful, as the abstemiousness, and temperance of the *Arabs* were exemplary.

Abu Obeidah was in great pain, till he saw *Kaled* return at the head of his victorious detachment. Though he was himself without any passion of avarice to gratify, without lust, and without desire, yet his religion prompted him to all. The dispoiling of infidels, and the propagation of Islamism, by the most cruel and inhuman means, were the corner stones of the Moslem faith; and, by a combination of principles, not uncommon amongst enthusiasts, the most exalted virtues were employed to the most detestable purposes.

Derar had been remarkably serviceable, in the expedition of *Kodos*, and having killed the prefect of *Tripoli*, *Abu Obeidah* made him a present of his fine horse and furniture, which were adorned with jewels of a prodigious value. *Derar* generously made a present of those jewels to his sister, the brave and beautiful *Kaulah*, who as generously distributed them amongst her female friends; and the prefect's daughter was bestowed in marriage upon *Abdallah*. *Derar rewarded.*

The califf, as has been already observed, was the head of the Moslem religion, as well as government, and his subjects considered him as the successor of *Mahomet* in both. When *Abu Obeidah*, therefore, informed *Omar* of the happy event of the expedition to *Kodos*, he acquainted him at the same time, with the deepest concern, that his troops in *Syria* had made free with the wines which that delicious country and its neighbourhood produces. *Omar*, sensible that his authority rested upon the strict observation of *Mahomet's* institutions, by the advice of *Ali*, ordered *Abu Obeidah* to punish every offender in that particular with eighty bastinadoes, or strokes with a flat wooden instrument upon the soles of his feet. The crime had been committed in secret, and therefore it was impossible to bring the criminals to any legal conviction. But *Abu Obeidah* enforced the heinousness of the crime so effectually, to the consciences of the offenders, that many of them confessed their guilt, and submitted to the punishment. *Omar punishes the drinkers of wine in his army.*

Abu Obeidah now proceeded to other conquests, particularly to make himself master of *Baalbec*, a city of *Syria*, which to this day is the pride and wonder of the world, for the magnificent and elegant remains of antiquity that it contains. This conquest, however, appeared too difficult, the place having been strongly fortified, by orders of the emperor *Heraclius*, and he first advanced against *Jushiyali*, the governor of which made a kind of provisional truce with him, agreeing to surrender the place within one year, if, during that time, he should reduce *Baalbec*, *Hems*, and *Sabwah*, and agreeing to pay him upon the spot, four thousand pieces of gold, and fifty silk vestments. *Abu Obeidah* then advanced against *Hems*, towards which place he had, before-hand, detached *Kaled*, with the standard of the Black-eagle, to ravage *Abu Obeidah's farther progress.*

vage

vage the adjacent country. *Kaled* had done this so effectually, that the inhabitants of *Hems* purchased a truce for one year, at the expence of ten thousand pieces of gold, and two hundred silk vestments; promising, that if they were not relieved by their emperor before the expiration of the truce, to surrender to the califf.

and wise
conduct.

As *Abu Obeidah* had full powers from *Omar*, to act as he should think proper, he treated the *Greeks* with the greatest lenity. When they refused to submit to *Mahometanism*, he imposed upon them an annual tax of about fifty shillings a head, but preserved them in the full possession of their other properties. This wise and mild conduct towards a people so immersed in luxury, as the subjects of the *Greek* empire then were, had prodigious effects. No longer fleeced by their own rapacious governors, they submitted to a power upon whose faith they could depend. *Tiberias*, *Cesaria* and *Misan*, together with the important province of *Kinnisrim* submitted to the same terms, as *Jushiya*, and *Hems* had done, and proper boundaries were fixt for the territories of both powers, which were inviolably maintained by *Abu Obeidah*.

He takes
Hamah

This conduct of the *Moslem* general, was far from being agreeable to the spirit of the enthusiast *Arabs*. *Kaled*, in particular, exclaimed against it, as taking from him and the zealous *Moslems*, all opportunities of shedding the blood of Christians, and other unbelievers, and *Omar* himself was so much influenced, that he gave *Abu Obeidah* a gentle reprimand, for his inactivity at *Hems*, where he still kept his head quarters. The time of the truce being now upon the point of expiring, *Abu Obeidah* put his troops in motion, and leaving an officer with a sufficient body of men, in the neighbourhood of *Hems*, he advanced to *Hamah*, or the antient *Hamath*, one of the noblest cities of *Syria*, which concluded a truce him upon the same terms that he had granted to *Hems*, and *Kinnisrim*; other places in the neighbourhood submitted in like manner.

and *Kin-*
nissrim

In the mean while, the governor of *Kinnisrim*, solicited the emperor *Heraclius* for troops. It is hard to say with the *Moslem* authors, that this was a breach of the truce, which undoubtedly was only conditional, and indeed *Abu Obeidah*, seems to have considered it as none, for he refused to act hostilely against the place, till the time of the truce was expired. We are, therefore, to impute the hostilities that followed chiefly to the impatience of the *Moslem* officers, who hated the inactivity of their troops; and obliged *Abu Obeidah* to form the blockade of *Kinnisrim*. The governor of the place, was at this time in the field, at the head of a strong body, and *Kaled* was detached with a party to intercept his return; but here *Kaled's* good fortune had almost abandoned him.

An *Arab* of great power, called *Jaballah*, the head of the tribe of *Gassan*, had turned *Moslem*, and had made the pilgrimage of *Mecca*, in the company of *Omar*. During the procession, a *Moslem* of mean rank, happening to tread upon *Jaballah's* vest, the latter beat him, upon which the injured party complained to *Omar*. *Jaballah* rather justified than denied the fact; because he was a sovereign and the other only a peasant, but *Omar* gave him to understand, that all his subjects, as *Moslems*, were upon the same footing, and that unless the peasant would forgive him, he would order the law of retaliation to be executed upon him. But the punishment was suspended till next day, and in the night *Jaballah* made his escape, and went to *Constantinople*, where he was joyfully received by the emperor *Heraclius*, who employed him against the *Arabs*. It was in order to form a junction with *Jaballah* that the governor of *Kinnisrim* was in the field when he fell in with *Kaled*, whose force was far inferior to that of the governor; and *Kaled's* party must have been cut in pieces had he not been seasonably supported by *Abu Obeidah*. *Kaled*, however, fought so desperately that he killed with his own hand the governor of *Kinnisrim*. This seems to have facilitated the reduction of that place, which finally submitted to *Abu Obeidah*, and the inhabitants acknowledged themselves, subject to the califf, while all who continued Christians agreed to pay him a poll tax of four dinars a head each dinar being in value about one mark sterling.

who joins
Heraclius.

The *Moslem* army was then divided; *Kaled* with one part of it was sent to invest *Hems*, the time of the truce being now expired, and *Abu Obeidah* formed the siege of *Baalbec*. This city is the same with the antient *Heliopolis* and *Libanum*, and besides its natural and artificial strength it was provided with a numerous garison under its governor *Herbis*, who seems to have been son to the late governor of *Damascus*. While *Abu Obeidah* was forming the siege, one of his parties fell in with a rich caravan of silks and sugar, two commodities then very scarce, and therefore very valuable, which they plundered. This coming to the ears of *Herbis*, he issued out of the city at the head of six thousand horse, but he had the misfortune to fall in with the main body of the *Moslems*, commanded by *Abu Obeidah*, who killed a great many of his men, and forced him back to the city desperately wounded. It was some time however before *Abu Obeidah* could regularly form the siege of *Baalbec*, which had been, by the emperor's particular order, stored with provisions, and every thing that could contribute to a vigorous defence; and *Herbis* himself was an excellent and brave officer.

Baalbec
besieged

Abu Obeidah, was sensible of the necessity he was under to save the lives of his men; he endeavoured to persuade the inhabitants into a surrender; and offered them the same terms he had offered to *Kinnisrim*. The good faith, which *Abu Obeidah*

and at-
tacked but
without
success.

The go-
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Interpre-
tates

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*Hems be-
sieged*

~~the emperor, the Arabians, tho' they were his back, yet~~

vage the adjacent country. *Kaled* had done this so effectually, that the inhabitants of *Hems* purchased a truce for one year, at the expence of ten thousand pieces of gold, and two hundred silk vestments; promising, that if they were not relieved by their emperor before the expiration of the truce to surrender to the califf.

and wise
conduct.

As *Abu Obeidah* had full powers from *Omar*, to act as he should think proper, he treated the *Greeks* with the greatest lenity. When they refused to submit to *Mahometanism*, he imposed upon them an annual tax of about fifty shillings a head, but preserved them in the full possession of their other properties. This wise and mild conduct towards a people so immersed in luxury, as the subjects of the *Greek* empire then were, had prodigious effects. No longer fleeced by their own rapacious governors, they submitted to a power upon whose faith they could depend. *Tiberias*, *Cesaria* and *Misan*, together with the important province of *Kinnisfrim* submitted to the same terms, as *Jushiya*, and *Hems* had done, and proper boundaries were fixt for the territories of both powers, which were inviolably maintained by *Abu Obeidah*.

He takes
Hamah

This conduct of the *Moslem* general, was far from being agreeable to the spirit of the enthusiast *Arabs*. *Kaled*, in particular, exclaimed against it, as taking from him and the zealous *Moslems*, all opportunities of shedding the blood of Christians, and other unbelievers, and *Omar* himself was so much influenced, that he gave *Abu Obeidah* a gentle reprimand, for his inactivity at *Hems*, where he still kept his headquarters. The time of the truce being now upon the point of expiring, *Abu Obeidah* put his troops in motion, and leaving an officer with a sufficient body of men, in the neighbourhood of *Hems*, he advanced to *Hamah*, or the antient *Hamath*, one of the noblest cities of *Syria*, which concluded a truce him upon the same terms that he had granted to *Hems*, and *Kinnisfrim*; other places in the neighbourhood submitted in like manner.

and *Kin-*
nissrim

In the mean while, the governor of *Kinnisfrim*, solicited the emperor *Heraclius* for troops. It is hard to say with the *Moslem* authors, that this was a breach of the truce, which undoubtedly was only conditional, and indeed *Abu Obeidah*, seems to have considered it as none, for he refused to act hostilely against the place, till the time of the truce was expired. We are, therefore, to impute the hostilities that followed chiefly to the impatience of the *Moslem* officers, who hated the inactivity of their troops; and obliged *Abu Obeidah* to form the blockade of *Kinnisfrim*. The governor of the place, was at this time in the field, at the head of a strong body, and *Kaled* was detached with a party to intercept his return; but here *Kaled's* good fortune had almost abandoned him.

An *Arab* of great power, called *Jaballah*, the head of the History of tribe of *Gassan*, had turned *Moslem*, and had made the pilgrimage of *Mecca*, in the company of *Omar*. During the procession, a *Moslem* of mean rank, happening to tread upon *Jaballah's* vest, the latter beat him, upon which the injured party complained to *Omar*. *Jaballah* rather justified than denied the fact; because he was a sovereign and the other only a peasant, but *Omar* gave him to understand, that all his subjects, as *Moslems*, were upon the same footing, and that unless the peasant would forgive him, he would order the law of retaliation to be executed upon him. But the punishment was suspended till next day, and in the night *Jaballah* made his escape, and went to *Constantinople*, where he was joyfully received by the emperor *Heraclius*, who employed him against the *Arabs*. It was in order to form a junction with *Jaballah* that the governor of *Kinnisrim* was in the field when he fell in with *Kaled*, whose force was far inferior to that of the governor; and *Kaled's* party must have been cut in pieces had he not been seasonably supported by *Abu Obeidah*. *Kaled*, however, fought so desperately that he killed with his own hand the governor of *Kinnisrim*. This seems to have facilitated the reduction of that place, which finally submitted to *Abu Obeidah*, and the inhabitants acknowledged themselves, subject to the califf, while all who continued Christians agreed to pay him a poll tax of four dinars a head each dinar being in value about one mark sterling.

who joins
Heraclius.

The *Moslem* army was then divided; *Kaled* with one part of it was sent to invest *Hems*, the time of the truce being now expired, and *Abu Obeidah* formed the siege of *Baalbec*. This city is the same with the antient *Heliopolis* and *Libanum*, and besides its natural and artificial strength it was provided with a numerous garison under its governor *Herbis*, who seems to have been son to the late governor of *Damascus*. While *Abu Obeidah* was forming the siege, one of his parties fell in with a rich caravan of silks and sugar, two commodities then very scarce, and therefore very valuable, which they plundered. This coming to the ears of *Herbis*, he issued out of the city at the head of six thousand horse, but he had the misfortune to fall in with the main body of the *Moslems*, commanded by *Abu Obeidah*, who killed a great many of his men, and forced him back to the city desperately wounded. It was some time however before *Abu Obeidah* could regularly form the siege of *Baalbec*, which had been, by the emperor's particular order, stored with provisions, and every thing that could contribute to a vigorous defence; and *Herbis* himself was an excellent and brave officer.

Baalbec
besieged

Abu Obeidah, was sensible of the necessity he was under to save the lives of his men; he endeavoured to persuade the inhabitants into a surrender; and offered them the same terms he had offered to *Kinnisrim*. The good faith, which *Abu Obeidah*

and at-
tacked but
without
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but capi-
tulates

Nothing but the misfortune of *Herbis* being blockaded in the old monastery could have obliged him to such shameful terms of surrender, and he was obliged to pay down the fourth part of the money out of his own pocket. The citizens however, by all that we can learn, had great causes of complaint

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Hems besieged

the siege raised.

Here we are told of a stratagem, employed by *Abu Obeidah* *Arrestan* which carries on the face of it, some marks of fiction; but taken by has upon occasion been employed with success in war. For stratagem. it is said, that *Abu Obeidah*, desired leave of the governor of *Arrestan* to leave with him some of his heavy baggage; that he might march forward, and the governor seeing upon what good terms he had parted with the people of *Hems*, readily consented.

consented. Upon this *Abu Obeidah* sent into the castle of *Arrestan* twenty large chests, each secured by locks without, containing an *Arab* officer, who by moving the bottom of the chest, could come out of it when he pleased. These chests being deposited in the castle, *Abu Obeidah* marched forward, but left *Kaled* with a party in ambuscade near the place. The *Moslem* army disappearing, the inhabitants of *Arrestan* met in their church, to give thanks for their deliverance from such unwelcome guests, and *Derar* with the other *Arab* officers, who were shut up in the chests, made use of this opportunity to rid themselves of their confinement, and rushing out they forced the governor's lady to give them the keys of the city, with which they opened the gates to *Kaled*, and thereby became masters of *Arrestan*, without spilling a drop of blood.

Tho' this stratagem, as has been already observed, carries with it an air of romance, yet nothing is too difficult to be believed of the intrepidity of the *Arabs*, and the treachery of the *Greeks*. For it is very possible, that the whole of this stratagem, if true, was no other than a piece of management, between *Abu Obeidah*, and the governor and principal inhabitants of *Arrestan*, to give a colour for the surrender of the place. Be that as it will, *Abu Obeidah*, detached two thousand men from his army to garrison it. Some of the inhabitants we are told, embraced *Mahometism*, and those who did not, as the place was taken without any capitulation, were obliged to retire to the neighbouring cities and country.

Shaizar
taken by
the *Arabs*.

Abu Obeidah marched with his army next to *Shaizar*, a town lying on each side of the river *Orontes*, now *Barada*, over which the inhabitants had a communication by a magnificent bridge. The perpetual flow of success, attending the arms of the *Arabs*, made them now to be considered by the inhabitants of *Syria*, and the neighbouring provinces, as somewhat more than men; and *Abu Obeidah* himself, in all the dispatches and summons's he issued, did not fail to ascribe his conquests to a supernatural power favouring his arms. Upon his summoning the people of *Shaizar* to surrender, the inhabitants, were inclinable to comply, but being chastised by the governor for their cowardice, they put him, and the few who stood by him, to the sword, and basely surrendered the city to the barbarians. When *Abu Obeidah* took possession of it, he shewed particular marks of favour to the traitors who delivered it up, and thus another of the most important places in all the East, fell without bloodshed, under the dominion of the *Moslems*.

Hems a-
gain be-
sieged.

The vast credit *Abu Obeidah's* arms had acquired, made him now think that no enterprize was too difficult for him to attempt. He pretended that he had kept his faith with the inhabitants of *Hems*, by raising the siege of their city, and marching to other conquests which he had compleated, he therefore returned, and sat down before that city. It was
in

in vain for the governor, and the principal inhabitants to upbraid him for a breach of faith, for he maintained that he had fulfilled all he had promised; and that if there was a failure, it was on their side, in not opening their gates in terms of the former truce. Here it may be proper to observe in general, that intrepid and enterprising, as these barbarians were, they met with many checks, when they encountered men of resolution and courage, in any degree equal to their own. They excelled in hardiness and activity more than in bodily strength, and the *Greeks* had infinitely the advantage of them as to armour, and engineering. The governor of *Hems*, resolving to sell the place as dear as he could, prepared himself for attacking the infidels next day, by taking the sacrament in *St. George's* church, the night before. Tho' this was indeed a desperate expedient, yet it seemed to be the only one he could take, the garrison being in no condition to stand a siege, on account of the provisions, they had so credulously parted with to their enemies. A *The Arabs* brave attack therefore was resolved upon, and next day, the defeated governor marched out at the head of five thousand horse, and in a sally charged the *Arabs* so furiously, that notwithstanding all that *Kaled*, and the other *Moslem* generals could do, they were put to the route.

Abu Obeidah was too sensible of the disadvantages he lay under to think of attempting to make himself master of the place by force. By the advice of *Kaled* therefore, he feigned a retreat, but the *Greeks* pouring tumultuously from their works, upon his rear, they were attacked in their turn, their communication with the city cut off, and sixteen hundred of the most forward of them, together with their governor were destroyed. Upon this disaster, they who remained in the city, offered to capitulate, but *Abu Obeidah* was prevented from agreeing to their offer, notwithstanding the vast advantages attending it, by an event which now threatened, the entire destruction of the *Moslem* empire: but at last carry the place.

The *Greek* empire was still very powerful and rich, and *The Greek* the emperor *Heraclius* being ashamed and grieved, at the amazing progress of the barbarians, employed his whole strength raises a great army. In an assembly of his chief counsellors, it was agreed upon by those of the greatest piety and understanding, that the disgraces his arms had suffered, were owing to the divisions, vices, impieties, and degeneracies of his subjects. But the necessity of union and reformation. being now apparent, and *Heraclius* having got over to his side *Jaballah* the king of *Gassan*, whom we have already mentioned, and who is said to have been able to bring four thousand *Arabs* to the field, he gave orders to assemble his army from all quarters, and to advance against *Abu Obeidah*, who was then employed in the siege of *Hems*. According to the *Moslem* authors, when all the imperial army was assembled, its numbers amounted to two hundred and forty thousand

thousand men, but the most formidable part of them, were those led by *Jaballah* who formed the van of the *Greek* army, the whole being commanded, by *Manuel*, a *Greek* general; but who seems to have been very unequal to his post.

Bad conduct of the Imperialists.

It seems to have been too melancholy a truth, that the *Greek* army in their march, were guilty of vast disorders; which served only to reconcile the inhabitants of the country, thro' which they marched, to the regularity and temperance of the *Moslems*. We are told of their having committed great barbarities, against such of the imperial subjects as had been obliged to submit to the califf, and who were intimidated from joining them; which some of them however did, or were forced to do. This disorderly behaviour gave infinite advantages to the barbarians; who knew well how to make use of it.

Enthusiasm of the Arabs.

The army under *Abu Obeidah*, had already suffered incredible hardships, in which they had been supported chiefly if not wholly, by the spirit of enthusiasm that still possessed them. The black eyed girls of *Houri*, whom they imagined they saw standing on the banks of paradise waving to them their green handkerchiefs, and inviting them to their embraces; with the softest expressions of love, made them plunge with pleasure into danger; and tho' checked by *Abu Obeidah* and their officers, many of them even rushed upon death that they might enjoy paradise. But the chief pillar of their prophet's religion being founded upon success, the whole fabric was now endangered by the prodigious army advancing against them. *Abu Obeidah*, unable to leave a garison powerful enough to secure his important conquest of *Hems*, was obliged to keep the field, and was in danger of being surrounded by the imperialists. In this distress he summoned a council of his chief officers, who all, excepting the intrepid soul of *Kaled*, appeared to be filled with despondency and despair; their opinions were divided, some were for marching immediately back to *Arabia*, where they could be joined with fresh reinforcements; and others were for fortifying themselves in their camp, and waiting the event of an attack.

Intrepidity of *Kaled*.

The first of those expedients was rejected by *Kaled*, as being too cowardly, the latter, as being too desperate, and he proposed that the army should immediately retire to *Yermouk*, as being the most proper place for keeping their communication open with the califf; and for their receiving any reinforcements that might be sent him.

Wise conduct of *Abu Obeidah*.

As the emperor's son, according to the *Moslem* writers, was advanced as far as *Cæsaria*, at the head of forty thousand men, this advice was approved of, but still their retreat must be attended with difficulty and danger. Notwithstanding all the differences in sentiment and conduct, between *Abu Obeidah* and *Kaled*, the latter continued to serve under him with incredible zeal and fidelity. But *Abu Obeidah* on

this

this occasion, gave an exalted proof of his good sense, for knowing the superior genius of *Kaled* in execution and enterprising; he freely resigned himself to his orders, and the retreat to *Yermouk*, was made good without any loss. *Manual* was severely reproached by the emperor's son, for suffering the enemy thus to escape, but he appears to have had secret instructions from the emperor, if possible to give them terms, if they would evacuate his dominions.

Abu Obeidah and *Kaled* on the other hand, by their spies, *Kaled* de- had perfect intelligence of the strength and character of their feared enemies; and they soon were made sensible, that the greatest danger they had to fear, was from the christian *Arabs*, under *Jaballah*. *Abu Obeidah* therefore having effected his retreat to *Yermouk*, entered into a kind of separate treaty with *Jaballah*, with a view of detaching him from the emperor's interest, but that not proving successful, *Kaled* who had a thorough contempt for the rest of the imperial troops, formed the desperate resolution of attacking him, with the flower of the *Moslem* army, composed of the *Ansars* and the *Moajerin*. The attack tho' desperate, was ineffectual. Three of the best generals under *Kaled*, *Yozid*, *Rafi*, and *Derar*, were taken prisoners, and in them he thought he lost an army, nor could all *Jaballah's* loss, which was considerably greater than that of the *Moslems*, make amends for them. But to complete *Kaled's* miscarriage, his fiery temper hurried him to affront the *Moajerin* by his partiality to the *Ansars*: which produced a breach between them, that might have been fatal to their common cause had it not been made up by the prudence and address of *Abu Obeidah*.

By this time *Abdallah*, the most expeditious messenger of *Abu Obeidah* all the *Moslems*, was detached by *Abu Obeidah* to the califf *Abdallah* sends whom he found at *Mecca*, and informed him of the danger the to the ca- *Moslems* were in, from the strength and number of the im- liph for perial army. The services of *Omar's* other troops in other succours: places were so numerous and so various, that he could not spare at this time a reinforcement equal to the danger, which he heard of with sensible but secret concern. He had recourse however, to the never failing *Hozem*, from which he plentifully quoted sentences of consolation; and mounting *Mahomet's* pulpit, he made a large sermon upon the benefit, and honour of martyrdom in the service of one's country, and the mighty blessings of paradise that infallibly attend it. He then wrote a letter to *Abu Obeidah* promising him an immediate succour of eight thousand men; and gave it with his benediction to *Abdallah*; he charged him when he came to the *Moslem* camp to encourage the soldiers, by calling out good news. *Abdallah* notwithstanding this dispatch would not return to the camp without running to *Medina*, where he performed his devotions at the prophets tomb and received a fresh benediction from *Ali*.

Abdallah's dispatch,

Thus fortified with two benedictions, he returned full of spirits and confidence to the *Moslem* camp at *Yermouk*, where he inspired all the officers and soldiers with the like alacrity. The reinforcement was soon put in motion, under the command of *Said*, whom the califf honoured with a flag of rich silk to be carried before him. While *Said* was on his march he fell in with a body of the enemy, consisting of five thousand men horse and foot. The latter he cut in pieces and the former he put to flight, but they were intercepted and cut off, by another foraging party of *Moslems*, under *Zobeir* and both *Said* and *Zobeir* arriving almost at the same time, at the *Moslem* camp with the heads and trophies of their enemies, the *Arabs* looked upon their success as an assured omen of victory.

Remark-
able inter-
view be-
tween
Kaled and
the *Greek*
general.

A kind of a negotiation, was, all this time, going on between *Manuel* and the *Arab* chiefs, and now produced an interview that was truly characteristical of the dispositions and manners of both. Besides the three *Arab* general officers lately taken by the *Greeks*, two others had undergone the same fate, and *Kaled* attended by one hundred men chosen for their strength and intrepidity, from all the *Moslem* army came to the *Greek* camp to treat about their ransom. *Manuel*, who in all respects, seems to have been a weak man, at first insisted by *Jaballah* that *Kaled* should dismiss his train, before he was admitted to an audience, but the other, as being the deputy of the califf's lieutenant, refused to part with a man. *Jaballah* then by *Manuel's* orders, ordered them to alight from their horses, and deliver up their swords; but the demand was as peremptorily rejected as the former; and *Manuel* rather than lose the fruit of the conference, ordered that they should appear before him, and seats were prepared for their reception. The *Arabs* put aside the seats, and placing themselves on the ground, told *Manuel*, that thy preferred to his finest stuffs the seat which God had prepared for man. This point being thus adjusted, *Manuel* began to reason mildly with *Kaled*, upon the irruption of the *Moslems* into the emperor's dominions, but affected upon *Kaled's* reply, to change his sentiments of the *Arabs*, and confess that he now thought them a wise, as well an acute people. This brought on farther reasoning on both sides, in which they widely differed, but the *Arab's* natural fierceness breaking out, he told *Manuel* he hoped one day to see him brought before *Omar*, with a rope about his neck. This ill mannered insolence provoked *Manuel* to tell the barbarian, that though his person was protected by the law of nations, yet he would immediately order the five prisoners to be put to death. *Kaled*, and all his companions upon this, started to their feet, and *Kaled* swore by God, by *Mahomet*, and by the *Kaaba*, that if he did not retract his resolution, he would instantly cut him to pieces, and every attendant he had should kill his man. This menace, which the *Arab* undoubtedly would have

have put in execution, whatever the consequence might have been, cooled *Manuel*, and instead of executing his prisoners, he made a present of them to *Kaled*, and received from him in return, his scarlet tent.

Tho' this incident in all probability is true in the main, yet we cannot think but that some particulars of the interview have not come to our hands. *Kaled* however intrepid and desperate, would not probably have ventured to have insulted, as he did, an imperial general surrounded by an army of two hundred thousand men, had he not been under the protection of *Jaballah* or obtained some other security, against the superior power of the imperial general. The reasoning of *Manuel* too upon the law of nations was absurd, for, the prisoners had a better right to the protection of that law, than *Kaled* had, after the insolent expressions he had thrown out. But in fact the law of nations was very little understood by either party.

Whatever may be in this, the weak behaviour of *Manuel* could not fail of inspiring those shrewd barbarians, with a great contempt for him and his power, and the mutual civilities that passed between him and *Kaled*, did not a moment retard the preparations of the *Arabs* for a decisive battle. *Abu Obeidah* at *Kaled's* request took his post in the rear with the yellow flag, which had been carried before *Mahomet* at the expedition to *Kaibar*, and he placed the ladies there, likewise, as well knowing what efficacy their reproaches and courage, joined to the authority of the standard and the general, would have to stop the flight of the *Moslems*, if thrown into disorder by their enemies.

We must here premise that in this work we are often obliged thro' the disagreement of authors, to keep by the great lines of history, and such as we are sure are true, by the consequences attending them, and by events, agreed upon by all hands. We therefore cannot be particular as to the numbers of both armies, tho' according to the most authentic accounts, that of the *Greeks*, was vastly more numerous, than that of the califf.

The *Arab* generals, in forming their dispositions for the battle, did not fail to animate their men with passages from the *Koran*, and by reminding them, that before them lay paradise, and behind them, was hell fire and the devil. After several movements, they got the advantage of the wind and dust, which greatly incommoded the Christians, by blowing full in their faces. Notwithstanding this, the left wing of the *Greeks*, gave so furious a charge to the right of the *Arabs*, that they were driven back upon their rear, and must have been totally ruined, had they not been rallied by the women who led them back to the charge with a mixture of encouragement and reproach. They were, however, again upon the point of being routed, when the women threatened to turn their enemies likewise, and *Sophian*, one of the bravest of the

The battle
of Yermouck.

The brave
behaviour
of Arab warriors.

of the *Moslem* officers, was for offering to fly, knocked down by a tent-pole by a lady, who put him in mind of his own expression, *That Paradise was before his face, and hell-fire at his back.* But the *Greeks* still continuing to pour in their numbers with great resolution, a total route of the *Moslems* must have ensued, had not the women now taken the command, and a third time prevailed with the men to make a stand; which they did till night separated both armies.

The *Arabs*, notwithstanding the loss they sustained in this first engagement, saw that of the *Greeks* to be much greater; and the exhortations of *Abu Obeidah*, who continued fervent in prayers; and the example of the women, who now took the foremost posts of danger, determined them to try the fate of another engagement.

Both armies, however, seem to have been inactive for some days; but a second engagement succeeded; in which the *Moslem* generals, animated and led on by the women, outdid all their former glorious achievements. The beautiful *Caula*, so often mentioned, in leading up the attack, was beat to the ground by a *Greek*; but *Ofeirah*, one of her female friends, instantly struck off his head and brought off the heroine. The *Greeks*, however, notwithstanding the amazing efforts of the *Moslems*, still kept their ground; but, towards evening, they were put to a total route. On this occasion, we are told that, a large body of their horse, who were retreating in good order, was decoyed into an unfordable river by *Joiab*, a nobleman of that country, whose wife had been violated, and his infant son murdered, by *Greeks* whom he had treated with the utmost hospitality: and, that the banks of the river being soon lined by a strong body of *Arabs*, the whole party perished.

Victory of the *Arabs.* This battle, which has ever since been so famous under the title of *Yermouk*, was decisive not only of the fate of *Syria*, but of the *Greek* empire in the East. The loss the Christians sustained in it was, according to the exaggerated account of the *Moslem* authors, one hundred and fifty thousand killed, and forty thousand taken prisoners: but, though this account appears almost incredible, it is certain the victory of the *Arabs* was compleat, and the loss of the Christians so great, that they were no longer able to make head against the barbarians in that country. As to the numbers in the *Moslem* army, they seem, including the reinforcements, to have been about forty thousand; and the loss in the last battle was, according to the return sent by *Abu Obeidah* to the califf, four thousand and thirty; most of whom were killed by the dexterity of the *Greek* archers.

The pursuit continued for several days; *Manuel*, who had fled by the road of *Damascus*, was overtaken and killed by *Nooman*, an *Arab* officer; and parties were sent out who effectually destroyed all the Christians who had taken refuge in the mountains or deserts. Thus, no quarter being given
after

after the battle, we may easily conceive the carnage to have been prodigious. It does not appear what became of the prisoners taken in the battle, though it is more than probable, that, if any were, all of them, excepting those who turned Mahometans, were put to death.

Though the enthusiasm, ambition, and cruelty, of the Hej. 15. *Arabs*, were gratified, by this victory at *Yermouk*, which they A.D. 636. got in the month of *November*; yet their avarice might have Prudence proved fatal to their affairs, had it not been for the prudence and authority of *Abu Obeidah*: *Serjebal*, a man of *Obeidah*. high rank, and formerly a secretary to the prophet, and the famous *Derar*, quarrelled about the spoil of a *Greek* officer, whom *Serjebal* had engaged, and *Derar* had killed, when *Serjebal*, who had been emaciated with fasting and with prayer, was on the point of falling under his adversary's sword. Their difference was submitted to the califf by *Abu Obeidah*, who was so nicely scrupulous that he would not name the parties; but the decision of the califf gave the spoils to *Derar*.

In the division of the other spoils, *Abu Obeidah* made a distinction, between the horse and foot, and between those who were mounted on the *Arabian* horses and those who rode horses of a foreign breed. All the cavalry, in general, had three times the value in spoils to what the infantry had, but the owner of a true *Arabian* horse had a double portion to what the master of any other horse had. This appointment gave general dissatisfaction; but *Abu Obeidah* declared, That the prophet had made the same division of the spoils which he gained at the expedition of *Kaibar*; and his distribution being on that account confirmed by the califf, the mutiny immediately ceased, and both officers and soldiers appeared entirely satisfied.

It is not to be doubted that *Omar* was highly pleased The *Arabs* with the conduct of his generals in gaining the battle of conquer *Yermouk*; but *Abu Obeidah* knew the temper of his troops *Palestine*. too well to suffer them to remain long idle: great part of *Syria* was now subjected to the califf, and there was no army in the field to oppose the *Moslems*; something therefore was to be done, which might give a greater lustre to their arms than all the conquests they had yet made; and this was no less than the reduction of *Palestine*. The taking of the holy city of *Jerusalem*, which had been held in the highest veneration by *Mahomet* himself, not only added to the empire, but gave a sanction to the religion of the *Moslems*; and *Abu Obeidah*, by *Ali*'s express advice, received express orders from the califf to make it his first object of conquests. In consequence of this advice, *Abu Obeidah* detached *Yezid*, with five thousand men, to invest the place; and promised to support him with large reinforcements under his best officers, which he accordingly did.

Siege of
Jerusalem.

Neither the city of *Jerusalem*, nor the country about it, were then in the same despicable, barren, and uncomfortable condition that they are in now; both of them, indeed, were greatly decayed, both in populousness and fertility, since the days of *David* and *Solomon*: but, when *Abu Obeidah* attacked them, they were not only in a defensible but in a formidable state. *Jerusalem* itself was strongly fortified, and provided with a numerous garrison; but the civil, as well as the ecclesiastical, government of the city, seems to have been vested in the patriarch *Sophronius*. The sight of the holy city, joined to the thorough contempt which the *Moslems* now had of the Christian power, inspired them with incredible ardour; and, when the garrison refused to open their gates, upon the usual terms proposed by the *Moslem* generals, the *Arabs* demanded to be led on immediately to the assault. *Yezid* had *Abu Obeidah*'s leave for that purpose.

The *Arabs*, however, met with such a resistance from the garrison, which was well provided for a defence, that they were repelled on every charge for ten days together; till, at last, *Abu Obeidah* was obliged to march with his whole army to support *Yezid*; and sending a fresh peremptory summons, he threatened to give those within the city no quarter unless they surrendered; adding, That his soldiers loved to die rather than drink wine or eat swine's flesh. This menace likewise being disregarded by the inhabitants, *Abu Obeidah* renewed his efforts against the city, but was still bravely repelled. The garrison, however, through the continual attacks made by the *Arabs*, began to be so greatly thinned and harrassed, that *Sophronius* was at last brought to treat of a surrender; and, for that purpose, he had an interview, from the top of the wall, with *Abu Obeidah* below. Though the latter declared, that he was determined to leave his last soldier before the place, rather than not take a city from whence *Mahomet* had, in one night, gone to heaven, and approached within two bows length of God in person, yet he was secretly determined to give the garrison almost any terms rather than not make himself master of the place.

It is
rendered
to the
Arabs.

The patriarch, on the other hand, sensible that he must, at last, be obliged to surrender, perhaps without any terms, no army being in the field to raise the siege, agreed, at last, to a set of articles, provided they were ratified at *Jerusalem* by the califf in person. The chief articles were, "That no new churches should be built in *Jerusalem*; and, that all *Moslems*, travellers and passengers, should have admission into the churches already built. That the Christians should entertain *Moslems* on a journey for three days. That they should not endeavour to convert any *Moslem*, nor hinder any Christian to be converted to *Islamism*.; and, that they should
show

show the most profound respect when any *Moslem* approached them. That they should make use of different dresses, manners, and names, from those of the *Moslems*; that they should neither ride upon saddles, nor carry arms, nor use the *Arabic* tongue in their inscriptions. That they should sell no wine, nor intoxicating liquors, nor erect crosses in their church, nor expose their books and badges of religion, to sale. That they should only toll their bells, and never take into their service a servant that had belonged to a *Moslem*. That they should pay all their capitation, and other taxes, punctually; and own the califf for their lord and master." The califf, on the other hand, promised to protect the inhabitants, upon their complying with those articles, in their lives and exercises of their religion.

Such, excepting a few insignificant particulars, was the capitulation that, after a siege of four months, according to the *Moslems*, but of two years, according to christian authors, put *Jerusalem* into the power of the Mahometans. *Omar* approved of the articles, and, after some debate in his council, he appointed *Ali* to be his deputy at *Medina*, and made preparations to set out for *Jerusalem*, that he might ratify the capitulation and perform his devotions in that holy city.

Though *Omar* was now, by the reduction of all *Arabia*, the finest part of *Persia*, great part of *Syria*, *Jerusalem*, and other noble provinces, one of the greatest and most powerful, as well as absolute, monarchs in the world, yet he indulged himself in no article of luxury different from those enjoyed by the meanest of his subjects. His journey to *Jerusalem*, which he considered it as the most pompous and magnificent of his reign, was distinguished by a number of his subjects who followed him thither through devotion or respect; but, in his own person, he had no pomp of attendance or parade. He rode upon a red camel, and carried with him two leathern bags, one containing some fruit, and the other his sawick, or ordinary food, consisting of sodden rice, wheat, and other unhusked grains; and the next brook or well he came to served him for drink. Before him, on the camel, he carried a leathern bottle for his water, and behind him a wooden platter, from which his attendants promiscuously shared in the sawick along with himself; and all his frugal meals were begun and finished by acts of devotion and prayer. His habit was, if possible, poorer than his equipage. It was made of the meanest materials, camel's hair, but tattered and squalid, so that the whole of his appearance must have been the most disagreeable that can well be imagined.

But the effects of it were great and inconceivable. His people considered him as their common father, and as being distinguished from the meanest of themselves only by his sanctity, his temperance, his humility, and love of justice; of which he gave several trifling, but, in their eyes, specious

cious and solemn instances, while he was proceeding to *Jerusalem*. He considered his treasury as the common repository of his people's properties, and himself as only being their steward. He appropriated no part of it to his own use, and was not only punctual, but generous, in all his payments. In other respects, he does not seem to have been possessed with that diabolical spirit imputed to him by Christian authors, though it is certain he was an enthusiast for *Islamism*.

When *Omar* arrived at the *Moslem* camp, to which he was conducted by a party sent by *Au Obcidah*, he pitched his tent in sight of *Jerusalem*, and, after performing his usual acts of devotion in the sight and hearing of all his army, he called for the articles of capitulation that he had signed before he would enter the city; and likewise gave them an additional security under his own hand, containing a very short, but comprehensive, security for their lives, possessions, and the sole enjoyment of their churches. The *Moslem* and the Christian authors have been very full in recounting the several particulars of the califf's behaviour after he entered *Jerusalem*, where he was received and entertained by *Sophronius*, who, seeing the dirty and horrid figure he made, could not forbear breaking out into the words of the Scripture, *This is, of a truth, the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet standing in the holy place.* Tho' those particulars are, for the most part, trifling, yet they are not wholly to be omitted here, because they serve to shew *Omar's* affability and love of justice.

His inter- Upon the patriarch's telling him, that a man of his di-
view with stinction ought to shew more respect to a Christian church
the patri- than to enter it in such mean horrid attire, he consented to
arch there. put on some clean apparel. His hour of prayer being come, he refused to kneel down in any of the churches, lest his so doing should authorize his *Moslems* to do the same, and thereby violate the capitulation. He therefore kneeled upon the steps of the church, but gave the patriarch an order, prohibiting all *Moslems* from praying there for the future but one by one. He then very courteously consulted the patriarch where he could build a mosque, that he might give as little disgust as possible to the Christians; and the patriarch leading him to the stone where *Jacob* lay when he saw his vision, *Omar* ordered a mosque to be erected there; which was for some time the only one in *Jerusalem*, and was in after times vastly enlarged and beautified; but the successors of *Omar* were not so scrupulously just as he was, for they broke his capitulation in almost every article.

Hej. 16. While *Omar* was at *Jerusalem*, and at *Bethlehem*, or the
A.D. 1637 neighbourhood, he was so constant and punctual in his acts of devotion, that his army was greatly edified by his example, and submitted to a prohibition, which he published, of their making use on their persons of any of the rich ornaments

ments, or dresſes, which they had acquired in their ſeveral victories and conqueſts. This prohibition induced the *Moslems* poſſeſſed of ſuch plunder to convert it into ready money, by ſelling it to the Chriſtians; who got ſuch cheap bargains, that we are told the inhabitants of the conquered cities and countries were thereby greatly enriched; and this is a collateral proof of the equity and mildneſs of their *Moslem* governors towards thoſe whom they received into their protection.

Paleſtine was not the only ſcene of the *Moslem* triumph. The con- this year; *Omar* had ſent *Said* with an army to compleat queſts of the conqueſt of *Persia*, but the particulars of his expedition the *Arabs* is darkly and confuſedly related, though we know that his in *Persia*, ſucceſs was very great. He made himſelf maſter of *Madayen*, then reckoned to be the capital of the *Persian* empire, and ſituated near the confluence of the *Tigris* and the *Euphrates*. Here the treaſures of the *Persian* monarch, his jewels, regalia, and his wardrobe, fell into *Said's* hands; and the whole amounted to a ſum ſo very incredible, that we are afraid to mention it. It was nine months after this, that the *Persians* could bring an army into the field to oppoſe *Said*; but he came up with them and engaged them at *Jaloulah*, where he gave them a total defeat, and obliged their king *Yazdejerd* to fly to *Fargana*, the capital of a diſtant inacceſſible province of that name.

Omar having ſettled the affairs of *Syria*, made *Yedzed* go- They at- vernor of that part of it which comprehended *Paleſtine* tempt *Cæ-* and the ſea-coaſt; and *Abu Obeidah* governor of the other *saria*. part of it which lay towards *Aleppo*; with orders for them both to extend their conqueſts to all neighbouring places not yet reduced, ſo as to render them permanent. He particularly recommended it to *Yedzed* to reduce *Cæſaria*; which, next to *Jeruſalem*, was the moſt important place in *Paleſtine*; and to *Abu Obeidah* to advance againſt *Aleppo*, a city which was of the utmoſt conſequence for bounding and ſecuring his conqueſts.

Yedzed found that the garrifon of *Cæſaria* was too ſtrong for the ſmall body of troops he commanded to maſter; and, that they were ſupplied by the ſea, which was open to them, plentifully with every thing that was neceſſary for their defence: he therefore deſiſted from his enterprize.

The expedition of *Abu Obeidah*, though extremely diffi- *Aleppo* cult, was more fortunate. Before he left *Jeruſalem* he pro- taken by vided himſelf with money and proviſions, and then he *Abu Obei-* marched to *Hems*, where he obtained farther ſtores of both. *dab.* He next advanced to *Aura*, and from thence to *Aleppo*, which he immediately inveſted.

Aleppo is a large city, two days journey from *Euphrates*, and ſituated in a noble plain, which abounds with all the neceſſaries and many of the delicacies of life; but its chief importance

importance, at that time, lay in its citadel, which was then deemed to be impregnable, and lay at some little distance from the city. The citizens of *Aleppo* were greatly under the influence of one *John*, an indolent peaceable man, and brother to *Youkinna*, the governor of the citadel for the emperor *Heraclius*, a brave and active commander. As *Aleppo* lay but twelve miles from *Kinnisrim*, which had been so lately reduced by the *Arabs*, the citizens, upon their approach, intimidated by the example of *Kinnisrim*, formed a kind of conspiracy to deliver up the city to *Abu Obeidah*, upon his first appearing before it; and in this resolution they were encouraged by *John*, who offered, if any thing was wanting, to bribe the *Arabs* to compliance by a large sum of money. In the mean while, *Youkinna*, in the citadel, prepared not only for a vigorous defence, but to attack the *Arabs* in the field; and, for that purpose, he issued forth with twelve thousand men, and surprized the advanced body of the *Moslems* under *Caab*, whom he defeated; and it was with difficulty that the *Arabs* who survived escaped to the main body of the army.

In the mean while, *Abu Obeidah*, with his troops, which had been weakened by a detachment, he had been obliged to send off towards *Damascus*, advanced against *Aleppo*, but was met by a deputation of the chief inhabitants, who offered to treat with him about the surrender of the city. The terms were soon agreed upon, and were the same that had been granted at *Kinnisrim*, but with a mitigation of the capitation and tribute-money they were to pay. This treachery coming to the ears of *Youkinna*, who was then in pursuit of *Caab*, he immediately returned to his citadel, and, before *Abu Obeidah* could take possession of the city, he entered it, and put three hundred of the citizens (amongst whom was his own brother *John*) to death, for their cowardice and perfidy. But the nearer approach of *Abu Obeidah's* army, obliged him to retire to the citadel, where he prepared for a vigorous defence. We are told, however, by *Moslem* authors, that, before he could leave the city, he was attacked by the *Arabs*, and, in his retreat, lost a vast number of his men.

Abu Obeidah calling a council of war, it was resolved, to press the siege of the citadel with all imaginable vigour; but the *Arabs* were not only repulsed, but surprized in the night-time, when reposed after the fruitless attack, by *Youkinna*, who killed some of them, and, notwithstanding all the resistance made by the ever-active *Kaled*, carried off fifty prisoners, who next day were beheaded within sight of the *Moslem* camp. This cruelty was, within a few days after, retaliated, by the *Arabs* surprizing and killing a party of *Youkinna's* horse, who still kept the field, and had put a considerable number of the *Arabs* to the sword, besides carrying off

off a large booty in camels and horses. The prisoners made on this occasion were likewise put to death.

This disaster, which seems not to be so great as is represented by the *Moslem* authors, served only to redouble the vigilance and courage of *Youkinna*, whose resistance was so vigorous, that the *Arabs* were obliged to draw off their troops to a greater distance from the city; and even the boldest of their generals despaired of success. At last, they discovered, or pretended to discover, that some of the *Arab* Christians, who continued still to be very numerous, served as spies to *Youkinna* in the *Moslem* camp; and it was said that one of them owned his crime, but saved his life by turning *Mahometan*. But all this seems to have been a fiction, invented by *Abu Obeidah* and the *Moslem* generals, as an apology for their want of success.

Youkinna's vigilance and intrepidity continued to be as great as ever, and, at the end of four months, the citadel was so far from being reduced, that, upon the *Arabs* withdrawing from the siege, *Youkinna* made himself master of the city, and punished more of the citizens for their treachery in the late capitulation they had concluded; which occasioned some of them to leap over the walls to avoid his severity.

In the mean while, *Omar*, hearing no news, or, at least, A reinforcement none that was agreeable, from *Abu Obeidah*, sent him a messenger, desiring to know the true state of affairs. *Abu Obeidah*, in answer, disguised the particulars of his disgrace as well as he could, but owned, that the citadel made such a resistance, that he had thoughts of quitting all farther enterprise against it unless he received other orders; adding, that he had lost a greater number of men than he could spare in the siege. *Omar*, upon receiving this letter, immediately ordered a considerable reinforcement to be sent him, that he might resume the siege with all imaginable vigour; and the foot were assisted in their march by seventy camels sent along with them for that purpose.

This reinforcement, though considerable, would not have answered the purpose of *Abu Obeidah*, had it not been for the resolution of one *Dames*, a gigantic *Arab*, and a man of prodigious strength and courage, who came with it. This person having seized some of the *Aleppans* who had escaped from *Youkinna*, learned from one of them enough concerning the circumstances of the garrison, to make him hope that it might be taken by surprize. This was no less than forty-seven days after the arrival of the reinforcement, and after the *Arabs* had been defeated in all the fresh attempts they made against the citadel, and obliged the second time to draw off from the siege.

Dames understanding that this circumstance had relaxed the vigilance of the garrison, dressed himself in a goat-skin, and, making choice of thirty chosen followers, it was agreed,

agreed, that *Kaled* should be ready, with a body of horse, to support him upon an appointed signal ; and, the more to encrease the security of the garrison, *Abu Obeidah* retired with his troops to the distance of three miles from the city. *Dames* waited till it was dark, and, ordering his men to follow his example, he advanced, sometimes walking, and sometimes stooping, or creeping, till he came to the bottom of the wall ; where he was told the place was most accessible : and some *Moslem* authors inform us, that, the better to deceive the out guards, he sometimes imitated the motions, and the noise, of a dog gnawing a crust or a bone.

Whatever may be in this, when he came to the bottom of the wall, several of his party mounted upon one another's shoulders, he himself being the undermost ; and the uppermost man being equal to the top of the wall, drew up the next one ; till, each drawing up another, the whole party mounted, and put to death the centinels whom they found remiss and asleep. They then gave the signal to *Kaled*, for whom they opened one of the gates : but *Youkinna* and his garrison taking the alarm, fell upon *Dames* and his small company, and would have destroyed them, had not *Kaled* flown to their relief.

At the appearance of this terrible commander within their walls, the garrison, thinking all the *Moslem* army was at his back, lost courage and threw down their arms. Many of them, amongst whom was *Youkinna* himself, saved themselves, their families, and effects, by turning *Mahometans*; whilst others chose to perish rather than renounce their faith. The spoil made upon this occasion was very valuable, and divided as usual by *Abu Obeidah* amongst his troops, after reserving a fifth part of it for the public service.

Conduct
of the
Greek em-
peror,
and re-
flections
on the
discipline
of the
Arabs.

The *Greek* emperor then resided at *Antioch*, under a thousand apprehensions for the loss of a part of *Syria* that still remained to him. When he heard of the fate of *Damascus*, he foreboded the loss of that province in these memorable words, *Farewel Damascus, farewell Syria*. But there is something at this time extremely unaccountable in the conduct of *Heraclius* ; for, though he was a prince of great natural courage, and had carried on his wars against the *Persians* in person, and with success ; yet it does not appear, that he ever was present in person at a battle with the *Arabs*, though he very often was near the field of action : neither do we know of any siege he formed to recover any of the places he lost from these barbarians. The last circumstance is the more extraordinary, as they seem to have been quite rude in the art either of besieging or defending towns ; and all the successes they met with in taking them, were owing to stratagems, or to the fears and treachery of the inhabitants ; or to their being either starved or fired out with the length of the sieges.

No

No mention is made of any engines the barbarians made use of to batter the walls of the cities and forts they took either in *Syria* or *Palestine*; and, indeed, their moveable camps, and their hasty marches, must have rendered heavy carriages extremely inconvenient to them, if not impossible to transport. It is therefore, upon the whole, reasonable to believe, that a great part of the secret history of their conquests have not come to our hands. The truth is, setting aside the point of religion, their sovereignty was much more tolerable than that of the *Greek* emperor was, or that of any of the petty princes, and præfects who tyrannized under him. As to religion, many of the *Greeks*, at this time, knew very little of true christianity; and all religions were indifferent to them: while many others, through the civil conveniences they enjoyed under Mahometanism, were contented to embrace it; and quieted their consciences with the reflection that they still were Christians in their hearts.

It is highly reasonable to believe *Hraclius* was sensible that this was the true state of his empire, and that he knew not whom to trust. The conquest of the *Saracens* were daily proofs of the treachery of his subjects; and *Youkinna*, as he outdid all his generals in ability, so he did in treachery. Being indifferent as to all religions, so he could dissemble with all. He held still a correspondence with the emperor, to whom he now pretended he was still a Christian in his heart; and that he had embraced Mahometanism, only that he might have greater opportunities to serve his imperial master, while he professed to the *Arabs* the most violent attachment to Islamism.

Abu Obeidah had formed a scheme to march directly to *Antioch*, and to besiege it; but *Youkinna* informed him that *Azaz*, a strong fortress, must not be left behind them. This fortress was commanded by a relation of *Youkinna*, one *Theodore*, who was then in the field at the head of three thousand *Greeks* and ten thousand Christian *Arabs*; and *Youkinna* laid down a plan for his surprising *Azaz*. We are told that this plan, which was to have been executed by *Youkinna*, at the head of no more than one hundred horse, was discovered to *Theodore*, by means of a spy, who let fly to *Azaz* one of those pigeon-carriers, with a note affixed. This is a practice to this day very common in *Syria*, and the pigeons in the neighbourhood of *Aleppo* are still famous for their expedition and punctuality in returning to the places where they were hatched.

The same spy informed *Theodore*, that *Youkinna* was to be supported by one thousand horse, under *Malec*, one of *Abu Obeidah*'s best officers. *Theodore*, in consequence of this information, took *Youkinna* and his detachment prisoners; but *Malec*, who had information of the discovery made by *Theodore*, had the good fortune to fall in with a detachment of Christian horse, whom *Theodore* expected to join him; and, making

making them prisoners, he dressed an equal number of his own men in their cloaths, and advanced against *Azaz*, to which place *Theodore* was now retreated.

It is very probable that the traitor *Youkinna* had found means to persuade *Theodore* that the intelligence he had from his spy was too hasty, and that he meant nothing but what was for the emperor's service; for *Theodore*, instead of taking off his head, committed him, and all his party, to the custody of *Leon*, his second son, who happened, at that time, to be desperately in love with *Youkinna's* daughter; and therefore he gave *Youkinna* and all his party their liberty, while his elder brother *Lucas* murdered their father *Theodore*, and both of them joined in admitting into the fortress *Malec*, with whom, in all appearance, they acted in concert and who highly applauded them and even blessed them for the parricide and treachery they had been guilty of, while they returned his caresses by turning stanch Mahometans. The booty and captives which were found in the castle, were immediately conveyed by *Malec* to *Alleppo*, in the neighbourhood and district of which *Azaz* lay. In the mean while *Youkinna* still had the art to keep fair with both parties and contrived to be taken prisoner by a body of the imperialists, who carried him before the emperor, to whom he made his story appear so plausible, that *Heraclius* took him into his confidence, and gave him the command of a considerable detachment which was to escort his youngest daughter to *Antioch*. While *Youkinna* was upon this service he fell in with a body of christian *Arabs*, who had defeated a body of *Moslems* under *Derar*, whom they had taken prisoner with two hundred of his party, and all of them were conducted to *Antioch*.

Derar carried before *Heraclius*.

The fame of *Derar* we are told, excited a curiosity in *Heraclius* to see him, and with the heads of his party, he was conducted to court, where *Derar* appeared in the true character of an *Arab*. For when his conductors instructed him as to the submissive form and manner in which he was to appear before the *Greek* emperor, he flatly refused to comply with it, giving for his reason, that *Mahomet* forbade him to adore any created being. The ceremony therefore was dispensed with, and the prisoners appeared before the emperor, who was attended by some of his clergy, and *Heraclius* singling out a venerable old *Moslem*, began to question him concerning the evidences and principles of his religion. The *Moslem's* answers were so extravagant, that the zeal of a christian bishop was provoked into some reflections against the prophet, which *Derar* resented so much, as to give him the most opprobrious language, tho' he had at his throat the swords of the emperor's guard at the same time. The *Moslem* authors attribute, the escape of *Derar* upon this occasion to little less than a miracle; tho' it seems to be owing to the orders of the emperor, who could not help

help admiring his intrepidity, perhaps not without some interposition of *Youkinna* in his favour.

There is nothing more remarkable in the *Arab* history of Reflection this time than the great choice of generals and officers which they had in their service. We read of a new officer's starting up to command, in almost every expedition, but of none who did not acquit themselves with fidelity and courage; and when they were unsuccessful, even while they were in chains, they struck their enemies with terror. One *Fadel* by *Abu Obeidah's* order plundered all the country round the city *Manby*, which lay in the province of *Kinnisrim*, and was formerly famous for the worship of the goddess of *Astarte* a Syrian deity, but answering to *Diana*, among the *Greeks* and *Romans*. The immense spoils which he made in this expedition together with the taking of *Azaz*, enabled *Abu Obeidah* to call in all his detachments that he might form the siege of *Antioch* itself. This city was situated upon the river *Orontes*, and in *Strabo's* time it was considered as the capital of all *Syria*, it was, considering its vast extent well fortified with towers and gates, and some authors say, that the compass of its walls was twelve miles; upon the whole, for situation, fertility, and accommodations of all kinds, it was one of the finest cities in the world.

Youkinna had so insinuated himself into the emperor's *Antioch* good graces, that he was made governor of *Antioch*, and general of his army there; at the same time a pass called the iron bridge defended by two strong towers, and securing the avenue to *Antioch*, was the first object of *Abu Obeidah's* attack. Those towers were filled with strong garrisons, but the soldiers who commanded them, were remarkable for their disregard to all decency and discipline, and being found one day intoxicated and all their posts unguarded, they had been chastised by the emperor's order. They resented this so much, that they surrendered both towers to *Abu Obeidah*, upon his appearing before them. This treachery disconcerted all the emperor's measures; he thought there was a private correspondence between his troops and the enemy, by means of the *Arab* prisoners in *Antioch*, and he proposed putting them to death. But he was artfully dissuaded from this by *Youkinna*, and he resolved to reserve them to be exchanged for christian prisoners, and to give battle to the *Moslems* upon the plain that lay between the iron bridge and the city, and to lead his army on himself.

With this view he drew up his troops, and *Abu Obeidah* did the like, the care of *Antioch* and the prisoners being committed to the traitor *Youkinna*. *Abu Obeidah* who generally succeeded as much by policy as by fighting, seeing the strength of the *Greek* army, knowing that it was to be commanded by a prince of great valour and experience in war, and reflecting with himself upon the great conquests he had yet to make, and the difficulties attending his receiving reinforcements,

and taken
by the
Arabs.

inforcements, sought to save his men as much as possible; and trusted to the secret correspondence he had with *Youkinna* in the city. He therefore instead of attacking the emperor, who had resolved to stand on the defensive, amused the *Greeks* by accepting of, and giving challenges to single combats, in one of which the gyant *Dames* had the misfortune to be taken prisoner, but found means to escape from his adversary's tent, during the confusion that attended a second combat. In the mean while *Youkinna* gave liberty to *Derar*, and all the *Arab* prisoners in *Antioch*; and putting arms in their hands, he declared against his imperial master. This treachery with the impression which some unfavourable omens had made upon the mind of *Heraclius*, threw him into such a despondency, that forgetting he was not only a prince but a man, he abandoned his army and took shipping for *Constantinople*. The troops he left behind him however, made a shew of a gallant behaviour, for some time, but being attacked in the rear, by *Youkinnah*. *Derar*, and the other *Arab* prisoners, they gave way, and great numbers of them were cut in pieces. This brought on an immediate surrender of the city and all its dependencies, and the conqueror obliged the inhabitants to pay him three hundred thousand dinars.

Such is the substance of the accounts that have come to our hands concerning the conquest of this capital of the East, when stripped of various circumstances, some of them trifling others of them fictitious, recorded by the *Moslem* authors. We are particularly told, that *Heraclius* at the persuasion of *Jaballah*, consented to send an assassin to *Medina*, to dispatch the califf, but that the murderer was deterred from his attempt by seeing a lion watching *Omar*, while he lay asleep under a tree, and licking his hands and his feet. A tame lion attending a prince has been known even in *Europe*, so that it is no extraordinary thing, if the same happened in *Arabia*, their native country. But perhaps a much better solution might be given of this pretended miracle, when we consider that it was the interest of the murderer, whether he was employed by *Heraclius* or not, to ingratiate himself with the califf, by this relation, and by his immediately embracing Islamism which he did.

Abu Obeidah's entry into *Antioch* was very splendid, but he soon grew sensible that so delicious a place must prove to his troops, what *Capua* did to those of *Hanibal*, should they remain in it for any time. Another circumstance gave him great uneasiness. Tho' it appears that his officers were attended by their wives, yet many of his soldiers had been for some years absent from their own country, and had taken a liking to the *Syrian* women, who like their own were generally very handsome, but far more polite and elegant in their manners and dress. Some of his *Arabs* had gone so far

far as to make wives of those fair *Greeks*, many of them he An *Arab* knew, longed to do the same, and the passion, which one abjures of his officers, who was prisoner in *Antioch*, entertained for Islamism, a lady of the emperor's court, had gone so far as, to the great scandal of his father and all true *Moslems*, to make him openly abjure Islamism and embrace Christianity. *Abu Obeidah* was too wise either to encourage or to check this passion in his soldiers; and therefore, he ordered them to marry no more *Greek* women, till he should know the sentiments of the califf, which he wrote for by the same messenger; whom he sent to inform him of the conquest of *Antioch*. *Omar* in return, after congratulating *Abu Obeidah* upon his important conquests, gave leave for such of his soldiers, as had left no families behind them to marry *Greek* women. At the same time he earnestly recommended to *Abu Obeidah* by all means to secure his conquests and to de- *dah* pur- stroy the remains of the enemy, who it seems had taken re- fues the fuge in the mountains. *Abu Obeidah* in conformity to his *Greeks*. own plan, did not suffer his troops to remain long inactive at *Antioch* or in the neighbourhood. *Kaled* marched at the head of a detachment, almost as far as the *Euphrates*, and reduced *Manby*, and several other towns and districts in that neighbourhood; obliging them to submit to pay an annual tribute, in time to come, and one hundred thousand dinars for the present.

But the reduction of the imperialists, who had retired to Adven- the mountainous part of the country, was a matter of much ture of greater difficulty; the cold upon those mountains was too *Meisarah*. intense for an *Arabian* constitution, and the enemies forces amounted to thirty thousand men, rendered desperate by misfortune and hardships. *Abu Obeidah*, producing the califf's letter in at assembly of the general officers, demanded of them which would undertake the service. None of them seemed forward to accept of the offer till *Meisarah* undertook it, three hundred *Arabs*, and one thousand black slaves commanded by *Dames*, were thought sufficient to march upon this expedition; the *Moslems* themselves being then entirely ignorant of the numbers of their enemy. *Meisarah* received by the general's hands a standard, the ground of which was black, but on which was depicted in white characters the usual motto of the *Moslems*, "Great is God and *Mahomet* is his prophet". *Meisarah* found great discouragements in his march. He and his soldiers, had very steep mountains to climb, but could learn no intelligence of their enemies till they happened to take a solitary *Greek* prisoner. He informed them that the *Greek* army lay at the distance of about nine miles, and that they were thirty thousand in number and having refused to profess Islamism, they immediately struck off his head. This formidable account of the enemies numbers, was so far from daunting *Meisarah*, that he advanced to seek them out. But the *Greeks* soon encompassed them

and prest them so hard that *Meisarah* was forced to dispatch a courier to inform *Abu Obeidah* of his danger ; and *Kaled*, as usual, was sent to relieve him with three thousand horse and one *Ayad* with two thousand more to support *Kaled*. The appearance of the *Arab* horse with *Kaled* at their head, had now become so terrible to the Christians, that it enervated their courage ; and they retired back to their fastnesses to which the *Moslem* generals did not think proper to pursue them.

An incident which happened at this time, serves to give us a farther idea of the manners of the califf and his subjects at this time ; and as this is one of the great ends of history we shall here insert it, and the rather because it seems to be well supported.

Hodafa freed by the emperor. One *Hodafa*, a *Moslem* of some consequence, happened to be taken prisoner in the late rencounter, and sent to *Constantinople*, where the emperor and his court, poorly and inpolitically employed all manner of blandishments and severities, even to the shutting him up without sustenance for three days, to make him drink wine and eat swines flesh. But all was in vain. Either the report of this firmness, or the merits of his former services, perhaps both, determined the califf to write a letter to the emperor, for *Hodafa's* liberty, which being in the true *Moslem* stile cannot fail of gratifying the curiosity of our readers. It was as follows, "In the name of the most merciful God, glory be to God, the master of the creation, who is the husband of no wife ; and the father of no child, and may his blessing, be upon his divinely gifted *Mahomet* his prophet, *Omar Ebn Al Kattab* the servant of God to *Heraclius* king of *Greece*. As soon as this letter shall come to thy hand, send me *Abdallah Ebn Hodafa*, who is a prisoner with thee ; I trust that God will guide thee to the peace of righteousness, if thou shouldst think proper to comply with this request. If thou dost not, I will send to thee those, who will not be diverted by traffic and commerce from the service of God". This very extraordinary letter had the desired effect. *Heraclius*, possibly willing to try how far gratitude might influence barbarians, gave *Hodafa* his liberty ; and accompanied it with some very rich presents, both to him and to *Omar's* messengers, and he sent the califf, at the same time, a jewel of great value. He likewise, ordered *Hodafa* an escort to guard him thro' the *Greek* territories. But the most extraordinary part of the whole of this incident was, that when *Omar* received the jewel, he offered it to sale ; but none of his subjects knowing the value of it, his courtiers prest him to reserve it for himself. His answer was, his conscience could not suffer him, and that it belonged to the public. It was therefore sold, and the money paid into the treasury.

We know of no effect the emperor's generosity had upon the califf, for soon after this, the *Greeks* attempted to take

take *Hems*, but were obliged by *Abu Obeidah* to raise the Progress
 siege. That general's character, was now so high amongst of the
 the *Arabs*, who were greatly influenced by success, that his *Arabs* in
 army was encreased, by this time, to forty thousand men, *Persia*.
 which the califf's prosperous state of affairs in *Syria* allowed
 him to spare for that service. As to the *Persians* themselves,
 most of them being void of all religion, and most of those
 who had any, confining their whole knowledge of it to
 the owning of a supreme deity, they very early and readily,
 embraced Mahometanism. It is true, at court, the religion of
 the old *Magi*, or something like it, still prevailed, but their
 emperors, and their great men, were such masters of vice
 and cruelty, that both their persons, and religion, were
 held in detestation by their subjects.

Cæsarea in *Palestine* still held out, against the *Arabs*, and Siege of
 the emperor had sent his son *Constantine*, at the head of an *Cæsarea*.
 army, to defend it against *Amru*, who was preparing to at-
 tack it, before he went, by the califf's order to subdue *Egypt*.
Amru, who seems to have been the least savage of those bar-
 barians, was, notwithstanding, so strict in his religion, that
 he punished some of his general officers with fifty bastinadoes
 upon the soles of their feet, for having drank wine, while
 they were upon their march. While he and *Constantine* were
 observing each others motions, the latter, desired to have
 a conference with some *Arab* of quality, consideration,
 and learning. This employment fell upon an *Æthiopian* Confe-
 black, who seems to have had no other merit, than his ha- rence be-
 ving been cryer or summoner to the prophet when he called tween
 the people to prayers; for his appearance was so slavish and *Amru* and
 forbidding, that he was not admitted to *Constantine's* presence. the son of
 Upon this *Amru* himself, perhaps glad of the *Æthiopian's* *Heraclius*.
 disappointment, undertook the conference; and was intro-
 duced to *Constantine*. He was too proud to comply with the
Greek fashion of making use of any other seat than the
 ground, upon which he reposed himself cross legged, armed as
 he was with his lance and sword. The substance of the con-
 versation that passed between them, was extremely trifling.
 The emperor's son, endeavoured to persuade the *Arabs* that
 the *Greeks* and *Saracens* were relations, because descended
 from common ancestors, *Adam*, *Noah*, *Abraham*, and *Esau*,
 and that therefore it was unnatural for the *Arabs* to invade
 his father's dominions. This argument was treated with
 proper contempt by the *Arab* general, who endeavoured to
 shew, that they had as good a right, as *Heraclius* had, to
 that country, which he received from his forefathers by
 conquest, and he frankly owned at the same time, that
 the *Arabs* found their *Syrian* and other conquests, so far
 preferable to their own native barren plains, that they were
 determined, instead of abandoning them, to enlarge them;
 not forgetting the preference which the *Arabs* ought to have
 on account of *Mahomet's* divine mission, and of their being
 descended

descended from *Ishmael*, which they seemed particularly to glory in.

It proves
ineffectual

This interview, like all others of the same kind, served only to make the parties greater enemies than they were when they met; and both generals manifested an inclination, to come to a decisive engagement. But while each was waiting to take advantage of the other, a very extraordinary incident happened. A christian officer, who by his habit seemed to be a person of great distinction, challenged the boldest of the *Moslem* army to a single combat. Numbers of candidates inspired with a belief that if they should fall in the encounter, they should repose in the crops of green birds, who were fed with the fruit and drank of the rivers of paradise; became immediately candidates for the honour of the combat. The christian proved victorious over all he encountered, and at last *Serjabil* whom we have already mentioned, and whose zeal seems to have grown strong in proportion as his constitution grew weak, thro' fasting and prayer, undertook the combat. But the christian would have soon put him to death, had not a *Greek* officer, stepping out of his ranks, with one blow of his sabre cut off the christian's head, and along with *Serjabil*, rejoined the *Moslem* camp. *Serjabil* amazed at his deliverance by the hand of an enemy, demanded who he was; and the stranger replied, that he was the unfortunate *Toleiba*, who had lyed against God, by pretending to inspiration, and to be a prophet. *Serjabil* comforted him by enthusiastic effusions from the *Koran*, and prevailed with *Amru* to undertake his reconciliation with *Kaled*, the scourge of false prophets, and soon to procure his pardon from the califf. For this purpose he gave a letter to *Omar*, who was so much prejudiced at *Toleiba's* name that he no sooner understood he was near him, than he hastily avoided the place; he was however prevailed upon to read the letter, and not only to pardon *Toleiba*, but to suffer him to retire to his former station in his own country, where he was a considerable prince, and he afterwards served as a general in the califfs wars against the *Persians* with great courage and fidelity.

Remark-
able ad-
venture.

History
of *Toleiba*

The history of *Toleiba* whom we have already mentioned to have been defeated by *Kaled* is pretty singular, after his defeat, he retired to a town called *Acleb* in *Syria*, where he was obliged to dismiss the remains of his army, and after wandering about, he was hospitably received and entertained by a Mahometan. But his generous landlord, discovering him to have been a pretender to inspiration, and the rival of his prophet dismissed him, tho' without violating the rights of hospitality. *Toleiba* after this, was at a great loss for some obscure retreat where he could lurk, being equally afraid of *Moslems* and *Christians*. But an army of the latter at that time marching into *Syria* disconcerted his scheme so much, that he was obliged to enter into the *Greek* ser-

vice

vice, where he remained, till he had an opportunity to ingratiate himself again with his countrymen, by the seasonable deliverance of *Serjabil*.

In the mean while, the *Greek* and *Moslem* armies before *Cæsaria*, continued to observe each others motions, and *Amru* having his reasons, for not attacking the *Greeks*, the time was spent in excursions and skirmishes in which the *Greeks* generally had the disadvantage. The season proving severe, and the *Greeks* deserting in great numbers, *Constantine* ingloriously shut himself up in *Cæsaria*, but the *Moslems* made themselves masters of his camp, and a large booty in it. Upon *Amru's* informing *Abu Obeidah*, the latter gave him express orders to invest *Cæsaria*; informing him at the same time, that the sieges of *Tripoli*, *Acca* and *Tyre*, were to be undertaken by the *Moslems*. Authorities differ as to several particulars, of the reduction of those important cities; but it is certain, that *Tripoli* was taken about this time, some say by *Amru*, but others with a greater probability by *Youkinna* who treacherously surprised it. *Tripoli* was a maritime port then, as now of great importance, in the ancient *Phœnicia*, and situated upon the *Mediterranean*, laying about one hundred and twenty miles from *Damascus*, and built under mount *Lebanus*. As it had the command of the sea it was extremely convenient for receiving the forces sent by *Heraclius*, for the relief of *Syria*, and *Palestine*, and the *Moslem* general had no sooner made himself master of it than fifty ships, full of arms, ammunition and officers, sent by the *Greek* emperor, sailed into the harbour; and fell into the hands of the *Moslems*. Nothing could have happened more fortunate for the affairs of the califf, than this accident did, for it erected the *Arabs* all at once without expence, toil, or trouble into a maritime power; and enabled them to undertake the siege of *Tyre*. If the reader should be stumbled, how a people, who till then should seem to have been, intire strangers to shipping, should so soon as they did become masters of navigation; he needs but to recollect the case of the *Romans*, who in their first wars with the *Carthaginians*, had never so much as seen the model of a ship, but became such quick proficient in marine affairs, that before the war was finished, they beat the *Carthaginians* at sea, tho' the latter till then was the greatest maritime power in the world. The *Arabs* of this time were possessed of all the abilities, and many of the virtues of the *Romans*; perhaps if a fair parallel was drawn between the *Arabs* under *Omar*, and the *Romans* in the first *Carthaginian* war, the advantage in every respect would lay on the side of the *Arabs*, in whose favour providence, for the sins of the Christians, seemed now most eminently to interest itself.

After all we have seen of the degeneracy, and lukewarmness of the *Greeks* with regard either to religion or liberty, ery of the we can make no doubt that a sufficient number of apostates *Greeks*, were found on board the emperor's fleet, who either bribed

intimidated, were found to offer their services to *Youkinna*, for it is most probable he was the conqueror of *Tripoli*. But indeed when we survey the whole of the transactions upon this occasion, it is pretty apparent, that the great successes of the *Arabs*, was owing to the secret correspondences they had, with the imperial generals, officers, and governors. The gratification of avarice and luxury, was all they had in view; and the califf with his principal *Arabs*, not having so much as an idea of those gratifications, had it in their power, from the spoils of the provinces they conquered, to satisfy them to their utmost wishes. *Youkinna* soon found means to navigate the fleet, that had fallen into his hands, to *Tyre*, where it arrived with a considerable body of land forces on board. It would seem as if these had been disguised in *Greek* habits; for *Youkinna* whom the reader may remember was himself a *Greek*, informed the inhabitants, that he was come with a considerable supply of arms and ammunition, from the emperor to their assistance. It is not at all surprising that the *Tyrians*, who had never heard of the *Arabs* being masters of a single ship, and ignorant of what had happened, were imposed upon by the traitor. They admitted him with about nine hundred of his men into the city, but it was discovered who they were, before the rest could land, and being surrounded and disarmed by the garrison; they were put into confinement.

The reader may recollect, that *Yedzed* had been ordered by the califf, to undertake the siege of *Cæsarea*, and that he had been obliged to desist from it, upon which *Amru* was appointed to that service. An *Arab* was so far from grieving at his being degraded from his command that he rejoiced in it, when it was given to a more fortunate, or able commander, and continued to serve with the same alacrity and zeal as before; and the reduction of *Tyre* being resolved upon, he advanced against it upon the land side with a body of two thousand men, which with the assistance of the shipping and troops aboard was thought to be sufficient for that service. *Yedzed* seems to have been ignorant of the fate of *Youkinna* when he drew near *Tyre*; for he was received by a vigorous sally from the garrison.

Tyre taken by the *Arabs*.

During the engagement, a *Greek* officer one *Bazil*, who we are told was an intimate acquaintance of *Sergis* or *Boheira* the monk, and was present at his first interview with *Mahomet*, had so great an affection for Islamism, that he released *Youkinna* and all his men from their confinement in the citadel, and these admitted the rest of their troops, who remained on board the fleet into the city, by which means, the garrison who had sallied out had an enemy in their rear as well as their front, and were obliged to fly; after losing a great many in the engagement. *Yedzed* becoming thus master, by assault, as he pretended, but in fact by treachery, of *Tyre*, found no great difficulty in persuading the inhabitants

to embrace Islamism, by threatening them if they did not to put them to the sword.

Thus fell under the power of the *Moslems*, the capital of the antient *Phenicia*, formed by all that art and nature could contribute to its strength and situation, to be the emporium of the East. By the reduction of it, *Alexander the Macedonian*, was thought to merit the epithet of the Great, more than by any conquest he ever made, but it fell without trouble and almost without bloodshed, into the hands of barbarous *Arabs*. The consequence of reducing *Tyre* was the reduction of *Cæsaria*, which *Amru* continued to invest when the news of the loss of *Tripoli*, and *Tyre*, disheartened the inhabitants so much, that they offered to capitulate with *Amru*; the terms were soon settled. The citizens paid him a large sum in ready money, and obtained his protection for the exercise of their religion, and the enjoyment of their properties, by stipulating to pay an annual tribute to the califf. The loss of *Cæsarea*, a city famous in Jewish, and antient history was attended by almost an immediate surrender of *Ramala*, a fortress about fourteen miles distant from *Jerusalem* called in sacred writ, *Rama*, and probably was the *Aramathea* of *Joseph*. *Acra* or *Akra* the antient *Ptolomais*, one of the glories of the *Syrian Palestine* surrendered next, and its example was followed by *Joppa*, a place of considerable strength and mentioned in scripture. *Ascula* and *Gaza*, names of towns rendered venerable by holy writ, were next surrendered, tho' the situation of the latter was so strong, that it sustained a long siege against all the power of *Alexander the Great*. *Saida* the antient *Sidon*, lying about twenty miles from *Tyre*, with which it is so often coupled by sacred writers, opened next its gates to the conquerors, who thereby became masters of one of the most celebrated manufacturing cities mentioned in any writing of antiquity. *Nablos*, the same with *Sechem* mentioned in holy writ, the chief seat of the *Samaritans* and lying at the foot of mount *Gerizim*, next surrendered. *Tiberias*, so named in honour of *Tiberius Cæsar*, then containing the college of the *Jewish Rabbins*, about the same time, opened its gates to the conquerors. The antient *Berytus*, once a celebrated seat of literature, did the same. *Jaballah* called by *Pliny* and other ancient writers, *Gaballah*, submitted next; as did the famous *Laodecea* of the antients, which is still a considerable port under the name of *Latikia*, and the residence of English consul.

It is melancholly to reflect, that all those seats of riches, learning, splendour and antiquity; and fitted by the modiousness of their harbours, the strength of their situations, and the beauty of the country round them, to be the strength and ornament of empire; are now scarcely known but by their ruins. Undoubtedly after the ruin of *Jerusalem*, upon the dispersion of that nation they suffered greatly,

and it cost the *Roman* emperors, even tho' they met with no resistance, great expence and trouble to lay them waste: so firm were the structures, the piers and the walls, with which they were adorned and fortified. But this destroying rage, was not near so fatal to them, as the barbarity, and stupidity of their *Moslem* conquerors. With learning and the small shew of liberty they had, industry declined, and was at last annihilated, and a country that in the times of *David* and *Solomon*, could show more riches, and bring more men to the field, small as it was, is now become, thro' want of culture, a desert so wild, so inhospitable, and uninhabited, as has brought the credit of antient history, both sacred and profane, into question with those who do not sufficiently consider the effects that indolence, despondency, and idleness introduced by a total privation of liberty and property have upon the face of a country. *Holland* was once, as despicable a spot as *Palestine* is now, and was industry to cease amongst its inhabitants, it would become as despicable again. This digression we hope, will not be blamed by our readers, because it is meant to prevent those prejudices, which the mind is apt to conceive in reading the relations of modern travellers, concerning this country once the garden of the world.

Conquests
of all Sy-
ria by the
Arabs,

The *Arabs* were now masters of all that noble country, which the antients called *Syria*, and which in fact comprehended all the numerous states and territories, lying between the *Archipelago* and the *Euphrates*. But insatiable ambition pushed them on to farther conquests, and they were persuaded about this time, not to pass the *Euphrates*, only by the imperial governor of *Mesopotamia* consenting to pay an annual tribute of one hundred thousand dinars. Six years we are told by the *Moslem* authors, were spent, in the conquest of *Syria*, so that it must have been compleated about the eighteenth year of the *Hejra*.

Plague in
Arabia.

The prodigious successes of the *Moslems*, were this year not a little checked by an epidemical distemper, which broke out in *Arabia*, especially at *Medina*, and destroyed a vast number of people. It was preceeded by a prodigious devastation occasioned by storms of various kinds, particularly of hail, and the pestilence communicated itself to *Syria*; where it carried off *Abu Obeidah* in the fifty eighth year of his age. He was as virtuous a man as any *Arab* could be, attached as he was to his religion, and even that did not divert him from always following the dictates of humanity, when the califf's service did not come in competition. He seems to have been naturally merciful and not to have indulged as *Kaled* and *Derar*, and other violent *Moslems* did any personal rancour, against the professors of Christianity. He was not as we have already observed of an enterprising genius; but he was a sound soldier, obeyed orders, and having under excellent officers, performed great exploits, and

and made prodigious conquests; twenty five thousand of the *Moslem* army in *Syria*, were carried off by the pestilence, amongst whom were *Serjabil*, *Tradel*, *Yezed*.

Amru was now the favourite general at the califf's court, where a powerful party was found against him. The reader is here to observe, that tho' the califf as a sovereign prince and high priest, was possessed of absolute power in his dominions, yet he had great measures to observe towards the companions and the wives of the prophet. These were held in high veneration by the people, and the successors of *Mahomet* were too wise to break with them, upon almost any occasion. They were consulted by the califfs, as so many cabinet counsellors; and it was in general understood by the subjects, that out of them the prophet's successors were to arise, as long as one of them was alive; and *Omar*, being pretty far advanced in age, could not be supposed to live long; which gave the other companions the greater authority amongst the people. Amongst the chief of the companions was *Othman*, who in right of seniority, no doubt, had hopes of succeeding *Omar*. *Othman* had conceived a prejudice against *Amru*, either on account of his great successes, or because, as he pretended, he was too enterprising and daring a commander, and advised *Omar* to displace him, just after the califf had sent him orders to penetrate into *Egypt*. *Omar* seemed to comply, partly, with *Othman's* advice, and wrote a very short letter, ordering *Amru*, if he was not entered *Egypt* when the letter came to his hand, to return, but if he was, to proceed, and wishing God to prosper him. At the same time *Omar* sent private intelligence to *Amru*, of what he had been obliged to do, and desired him to order matters so, as that he might still continue in his command, and proceed in the conquest of *Egypt*. *Amru* being thus instructed, and well comprehending how matters stood at the califf's court, was then upon his march towards *Egypt*, when *Omar's* messenger overtook him with his dispatches. *Amru*, pretending he was then too much in a hurry to read the califf's letters with proper attention, ordered the messenger to attend him, and by making forced marches, he reached *Rafac*, a village in *Egypt*. Here he called a council of war, and ordered his army to rest. The messenger was then introduced, and *Amru*, most solemnly, read the califf's letters, before all his officers; and with affected ignorance, he asked, in what country the village they were then in lay. Upon their telling him, that it belonged to *Egypt*, he ordered his army to be in readiness to march forward, to the conquest of the country.

It seems probable, that by this time the *Arabs* had gained some knowledge of engineering from the *Greeks*, for we are told, that *Amru*, after a formal siege, took *Farma*, a town situated upon that neck of land that runs between the gulf of *Arabia*, commonly called the *Red Sea*, and the first

A party
formed
against
Amru.

He is fa-
voured by
califf.

mouth

mouth of the *Nile*, where it discharges itself into the *Mediterranean*. This is the isthmus which *Julius Cæsar* had projected to cut through, so as to open a communication between the gulf of *Arabia* and the *Mediterranean*, which would have been of infinite service to the *European* commerce; but he was assassinated, before he could execute his scheme. When *Amru* was upon the spot, he considered the ground, and finding the isthmus was not above seventy miles over, he proposed to the califf the same thing that *Julius Cæsar* had projected. But *Omar* and his court were too cautious to expose their new empire to the invasions of the *Europeans*, who having the advantage of shipping, would not fail, if such an opening was made, to pour troops into their dominions.

Mefer, the ancient *Memphis*, and once the capital of *Egypt*, was next attacked by *Amru*. *Mefer*, we are told, was, next to *Alexandria*, the strongest place in all *Egypt*, and had been fortified by the *Egyptians*, with a view of stopping the progress of the *Arabians*. *Amru*, whose army did not amount to above four thousand men, lost a great many of them before the citadel of this place, and he was reinforced by the califf with four thousand more, under *Zobeir*, the governor of *Mefer*. This was a *Copt*, and his name was *Mokawkas*. He was afraid of being punished by the emperor for his oppressive practices; and had, for some time, acted in *Egypt* with a kind of independent authority. Having amassed immense wealth, he formed a secret design of putting himself under the protection of *Amru*, but there is some reason, upon the face of history, to believe, that he could not bring the *Greek* garison into his treacherous design. He prevailed with them, however, by magnifying the power of the *Arabs*, to retire into the island of the *Nile*, where they were safe from the attacks of the enemy; and the garison of the citadel of *Mefer* being now very weak, *Zobeir* took that opportunity to apply his military engines, and scaling ladders, to the weakest part of the wall of the citadel; and thereby made himself master of the place. In the meanwhile *Mokawkas*, who had a secret correspondence with *Amru*, perceiving that the *Greeks* had discovered his treachery, entered upon a separate treaty with the *Arab* general, in behalf of himself, and the *Copts*. The reader is to know, that the *copts* professed Christianity, but it was such a Christianity, that the principles of it were scarcely to be found in the holy scriptures; for it was a jumble of the ancient idolatry of the *Egyptians*, the fire-worship of the *Persians*, and some faint traces of the Christian religion; which having been once planted amongst them, gave name to their worship. They hated the *Greeks* more than they did the *Arabs*; and they were glad to embrace that opportunity of putting themselves under *Amru's* protection.

The

The foundation of the treaty was, that all the *Copts* except the boys and old men, should pay to the califf a tribute of two dinars a-head. It was then stipulated, that the *Copts* should supply the *Arabs* with provisions, for their march after the *Greeks*, by which, in fact, was meant, making themselves masters of all *Egypt*; some other terms of less importance were likewise stipulated, and the *Copts*, in consideration of the tribute, were to enjoy the exercise of their religion. *Egypt*, at this period, seems to have been immensely populous, for we are told, by authors who lived nearest the time, that the number of *Copts* (for this treaty was made for the whole nation) who paid this tribute, amounted to six millions.

But the *Greeks*, who had retired to the island, through *Makawka's* treachery, refused to ratify this treaty, and defended themselves till the waters of the *Nile* fell, and they reached the main-land, directing their march to a place called *Kerom al Shoraik*. Their escape gave the *Copts* vast uneasiness, for one of the chief motives they had for submitting to *Amru* was, in hopes that he would exterminate all the *Greeks* in their country; they therefore instigated *Amru* to pursue and cut them off, and assisted him all they could with intelligence of their numbers and situation. *Amru*, accordingly, pursued the *Greeks* to *Keram*, where he attacked them, and beat them from post to post, they making an obstinate resistance for nineteen days, till he drove them into *Alexandria*, the then capital of *Egypt*, and one of the finest, and largest cities in the world. If we are to believe the account given of it to the califf, by *Amru* himself, it contained four thousand palaces, four thousand baths, forty thousand *Jews* who paid tribute, four thousand places for the exhibition of public diversions, twelve thousand gardeners, who furnished the city with vegetables of all kinds, which was the chief food of the *Egyptians*. That this account is not much exaggerated, is plain, from the remains of antiquity, which are still visible there, and of which we have lately had very accurate accounts.

It is highly probable that *Amru*, who had spent upwards of nine months in the siege of *Mefer*, had, by this time, received farther reinforcements from the califf, who was no stranger to the prodigious value of the conquests he was attempting. Without this supposition, it is almost impossible to conceive how his little army could invest so great a city, defended by a numerous, well-provided garison, rendered brave through despair. *Amru*, however, offered the inhabitants his protection, provided they would either embrace Islamism, or consent to pay tribute. Those conditions being rejected, the siege went on with great obstinacy on both sides, and *Amru* lost abundance of his bravest men, by the engines which played from the citadel. He therefore at-

tacked

Amru taken prisoner

his singular escape.

tacked it sword in hand, and actually made a lodgement within the works. But the garrison making head, the *Arabs* were driven out with the loss of a great number of their men, and their best officers, and *Amru* himself was taken prisoner, together with *Moslemah*, and *Wardan*, a favourite slave belonging to *Amru*. These three were immediately carried before the governor of the place, and from what followed it appears, there was amongst them no distinction of dress. The governor demanded of them the reason of their irruption into the imperial territories; *Amru* fiercely answered, that they came to oblige the inhabitants, either to profess Mahometanism, or to pay tribute; that if they refused to do either, they were all to be cut in pieces. The fierceness of this answer made one of the *Greek* officers, who was present, believe that *Amru* himself spoke; and advised the governor immediately to order his head to be struck off. *Wardan*, who understood *Greek*, upon this, with surprising presence of mind, stepped up, and giving *Amru* a box on the ear, demanded, how such a mean slave as he was durst talk in that impudent manner, in presence of his betters? *Moslemah* then told the governor, that *Amru* intended to raise the siege, and that the califf had, in a letter to that general, intimated, that he was about to send twelve of the principal personages about his court, to treat with him concerning an honourable accommodation. According to the *Western* authors, *Wardan's* presence of mind, and this plausible story, with a promise *Moslemah* made, that if they were dismissed, they would represent their treatment in the most favourable light, to induce *Amru* the sooner to raise the siege; imposed upon the credulity of the governor, who, thinking them to be mean persons, ordered them all to be dismissed.

Alexandria taken by the *Arabs*.

The *Arab* army, which had given its general up for lost, received him and his fellow prisoners with loud acclamations. The first use *Amru* made of his deliverance, was to give orders for immediately storming the citadel, which was done with such vigour, that they carried it, and put numbers of the garrison to the sword. There seems, however, to be great reason for believing, that the *Greeks* in the city continued to make so obstinate a resistance, that they capitulated, but not before most of the inhabitants of the city had made their escape, either on board their ships, or into the open country: for we are told, that *Amru* marched with the bulk of his army, in pursuit of those who fled into the country, which the *Greeks*, on board the ships, understanding, they attacked the city, and put the small garison that had been left in it to the sword. This coming to *Amru's* ears, he returned with his army, and dislodging the *Greeks* in their turn; he killed a great number of them, and forced the others again to retire to their ships. That *Amru* had received very great reinforcements, before he reduced

duced *Alexandria*, is certain; for, during the fourteen months that the siege continued, we are told, that he lost twenty-three thousand men.

The conquest of *Alexandria* was, by far, the greatest that had yet been made by the *Arabs*; the prodigious labour and losses which it had cost them, and the hardships they had suffered during the siege inspired them with the hopes of plundering the city, to make themselves amends. But such was the prodigious veneration the *Arabs* had for discipline, that they forbore all violence, till their general, *Amru*, could consult the califf, which he did, by a messenger; *Omar's* answer was, "That the expence of blood and treasure he had been at, in taking *Alexandria*, was such, as obliged him to insist upon the city being preserved, and all its wealth brought into the public treasury. He seemed even to rebuke *Amru*, for hinting at the disorderly inclination of the army, and ordered him to deposit the tribute-money, to be paid by the *Copts*, in some place of safety, in, or near, *Alexandria*. The immense sum brought in by this capitulation, was increased by other taxes, upon vineyards, and various kinds of commodities; so that, upon the whole, *Omar* was, by far, the richest prince at that time in the world.

The republic of letters, however, has reason to execrate the memory of that barbarian, for his destroying the famous library of *Alexandria*, the finest, perhaps, then in the world. *Amru*, having some faint knowledge of letters, from his conversation with certain learned men, particularly, of one *John*, the grammarian, whom he found at *Alexandria*, would willingly have spared this stupendous library, which had been the work of ages to collect, but he did not venture to do any thing without consulting of *Omar*, and that barbarian sent him express orders to destroy all the books there. For this truly barbarous reason, that the *Koran* was sufficient for the instruction of all mankind; that if the books in the library agreed with it, they were superfluous, but if they contradicted it, they were to be destroyed. When *Amru* received this peremptory order, we are told that he distributed the books amongst the keepers of the four thousand baths of the city, to serve as fuel for heating them. The number of manuscripts destroyed on this occasion, was considerably above five hundred thousand; and, we are told, that they supplied the baths for six months: there is, however, some reason for believing, that some of them escaped that diabolical conflagration, and are, even at this time, preserved in the repositories of learning. The present remains of *Alexandria*, as described by travellers, are truly wonderful; but some have doubted, whether the walls that are so celebrated for their beauty and strength, are the same that surrounded it when *Amru* besieged it. As the *Arabs* bore an invincible hatred to the *Greeks*, it was sharpened by the resistance made to the latter at *Alexandria*, and not being included in the capitulation made with the *Copts*, they were severely

The *Alexandrian* library destroyed.

severely taxed. The taking of *Alexandria*, proved of infinite service to the rest of *Omar's* dominions, particularly in *Arabia*, which was now afflicted with famine, but relieved, from that granary of the East.

Farther
conquests
of the
Arabs.

Edeffa
conquer-
ed,
and *Con-*
stantia,
and *Har-*
ran,

and *Ser-*
vas.

Amru, having reduced *Alexandria*, extended his conquests into the Western parts of *Africa*, which he subdued, and laid under tribute. He is particularly said to have made himself master of the *African Tripoli*; which is now the capital of a piratical republic of that name, and of the tract between *Barka* and *Zaweilah*. *Omar* next ordered *Ayad*, one of his generals, to advance into *Mesopotamia*, where he invested *Edeffa*, an ancient city, peopled by Christians, and lying on the banks of the *Euphrates*. The terror of the *Moslem* arms obliged them, however, to agree to pay a tribute, that they might save their persons and effects, and be tolerated in the profession of their religion. From *Edeffa* *Ayad* marched southward to *Constantia*, which lies upon the Eastern bank of the *Euphrates*; and which he was obliged to take by storm, as he did *Deras*, another strong fortress, where he massacred all the inhabitants. *Harran* was next besieged by *Amru*, in person, and obliged to capitulate on the same terms as *Edeffa* had done; and, in short, almost all the strong places in *Mesopotamia* did the same. The particulars of those conquests are very confusedly related, both by the *Moslem* and *Christian* writers, who differ greatly in the names and situation of places. All we are certain of is, that the imperial forces were every where defeated upon the *Euphrates*, and in *Mesopotamia*, and that the *Arabs*, at last, no sooner appeared before a place, than it surrendered to them. About the same time, the *Moslems*, under *Mogheirah*, penetrated into *Armenia*, where he took a great many strong places, and reduced the province of *Aderbijan*, with the city of *Adatin*, and all the country lying about mount *Taurus*; and he carried his army even into *Capadocia*, which he forced to receive the yoke of the califf; particularly the great city of *Seras*. We find the same *Mogheirah* was governor of *Basra*, where he succeeded *Uthal*, but he himself was succeeded in that government, and in the command of the *Moslem* troops in *Persia*, by *Abu Musa*, who was likewise made prefect of *Mijan*, and settled some *Arabian* colonies in the neighbourhood of *Basra*. The famous city of *Shiz*, where stood the capital temple of the fire-worshippers, founded by *Zoroaster*; or, as he is called by the modern *Persians*, *Zerdust*, was reduced by the *Moslems*, about the same time; as was likewise almost the whole province of *Kuzestan*, the ancient *Susiana* of the *Persians*, which lies upon the *Persian* gulf; but the truth is, those, and a great many other places, seem to have been several times subdued, and by different commanders. It is not to be reasonably supposed, that the *Arabs* could possibly guard all the numerous conquests they made in so wide and so populous a country. Many of them, undoubtedly, threw
off

off the yoke, and were reduced, perhaps, by leaders, different from those who originally conquered them; and this, without question, occasions some confusion in their history. The vast province of *Korasan*, which answers to the antient *Bactriana*, or part of it, was subdued about the same time, that is, about the twenty-first, or twenty-second, year of the *Hejra*. It was about the same time, that the famous battle of *Nohawand* was fought, between *Al Nooman*, a *Moslem* general, and *Yazdejerd*, the king of *Persia*. We are informed that this battle was very bloody, that it lasted several days, and cost *Nooman*, who was one of *Mahomet's* companions, his life; but at last ended in the total defeat of *Yazdejerd*, and reduction of *Ispahan* itself, the capital of all *Persia*, under the califf. *Nooman* was succeeded in the command of the *Moslem* troops by *Hodaifa*, who compleated the conquest of *Persia*, and *Yazdejerd* was obliged to fly to a remote part of his dominions; after losing all his rich effects, and seeing his daughters carried away into captivity by the victors. By this time, the famous *Abu Obeidah*, and the more famous *Kaled*, were dead. The latter, we are told, expired at *Hems*, in the same year the battle of *Nohawand* was fought.

Battle of
Nohawand and
death of
Kaled.

Character
of the

Arab go-
vernment.

Amongst the various subjects of reflection, upon those events, which, did we not to this day see incontestable evidences of their truth, seem incredible, none is more wonderful than that fidelity, with which *Omar* was served by his generals and his troops. It does not appear, that he was ever put to the necessity of even punishing a fault, unless we call the drinking of wine, such. Being himself temperate, abstemious, and modest, to a prodigy; he had the art of inspiring others with the same virtues; and the sword of no conqueror was more awful in time of war, than his walking-stick was at all times, and on all occasions. His œconomy was seen, before his death, by an exact inventory he ordered to be made out, of the numbers of the inhabitants, horses, camels, and useful creatures in his dominions; and likewise of his most valuable effects, houses, forts, and cities. But notwithstanding his modesty, and extreme frugality upon his own person, he is said to have been one of the most generous princes that ever lived. His generosity was not of that frantic kind, which enriches favourites and flatterers. It had for its objects whole bodies of his people, tribes, cities, and countries, whose wants he relieved, and whose happiness he provided for. If one part of his dominions had plenty, his vast power was employed in communicating that plenty to those parts that were streightened, or pinched with scarcity; and as he was a scrupulous adherer to the principles and practices of the prophet, he never gratified any undue resentment, or any extravagance of passion; so that his subjects always knew what they had to trust to, either in being rewarded, or punished. It is, however, equally true, that he was severe and unrelenting, in all matters that concerned religion; and to that he seems to have owed his death.

It

Omar

It has already been observed, that the califfs affected no pre-eminency, but in the application to their duties of government, and their religion. They gave their audiences under a tree ; and their palaces were built with mud-walls: the meanest of his subjects had access to *Omar*, and he conversed familiarly, even with the meanest of his slaves. His general, *Mogheirah*, had a *Persian* slave, called *Feruz*, who, it seems, was a man of ingenuity, and being a *Magin*, he purchased the exercise of his religion, by paying two dirkerns, or pieces of money, a day, to his master. *Feruz* complained to *Omar* of this intolerable tax, desiring to have part of it remitted. By what is told us on this head, it appears, as if the slaves of *Moslems* had the profit of their own labour, for *Omar* refused to mitigate the tax paid by *Feruz*, because, it seems, he was a most excellent mechanic, and understood how to build a wind-mill. *Omar* giving this for his reason why he would not mitigate the tax, *Feruz* swore that he would construct a wind-mill for him, which should not cease grinding till the day of judgment ; even this menace did not prevail upon *Omar* to take off the slave's head. He was too magnanimous to put any man to death upon suspicion ; though he expressed himself to be sensible of the insolence of the slave. Being soon after at prayers in the mosque at *Medina*, *Feruz* gave him three stabs with a dagger, in the body, and one of the wounds, in three days time, proved mortal. As to *Feruz* himself, he killed seven of the audience, and wounded six more, before he could be seized ; and even then he found means to stab himself so desperately, that he dropt down dead.

He refuses

to nomi-

nate a

successor.

While *Omar* was upon his death-bed, he was visited by a physician, who, finding him past recovery, requested him to make his will, and the chief *Moslems* about him begged him to name his successor ; which he refused to do. Several were proposed, but he had objections to them all. He thought *Ali* had too much levity in his temper, for the discharge of the califat. He thought *Othman* would be too partial to his relations ; and that *Zobeir* was too avaritious ; and *Said* too proud, and intractable. He had much the same objection to *Telha* ; nor could he be prevailed upon to nominate his own son. At last he nominated *Othman*, *Ali*, *Zobeir*, *Abdalrama*, *Telha*, and *Said*, who had all of them been companions of the prophet, to nominate a successor to him, by a plurality of voices ; but excluded his son from a vote, though he enjoined him to be present. *Ali* thought himself injured by this manner of proceeding, and that his relation to the prophet, the vast services he had done to Islamism, and other circumstances, gave him an indisputable title to the dignity. But *Abdalrama*, resigning all his own pretensions, it was agreed that he should nominate one of the other five, and, after some consultation, the chance fell upon *Othman* ; who, as being the most unexceptionable,

was immediately recognized. It is, however, very probable, that the choice might have fallen upon *Ali*, had he not shewn a dislike to the memory of *Abubeker* and *Omar*, whom he considered, as being little better than usurpers of his right; and this declaration lost him the califat at this time.

Omar was about sixty-three years of age, when he died; Farther in the twenty-third year of the *Hejra*, which answers to the year of our Lord 643. He was in person, as well as his practice and principles, so like *Abubeker*; that they are stiled the two *Omars*; his person very tall, his head bald, and his complexion, like most of the *Arab* men, swarthy. In imitation of his two predecessors, he tinged his head and his beard of a beautiful red colour; his chief food was barley-bread; which he sometimes eat with salt; and his drink was only water. He had a saying, that the *Arab* empire must perish, as soon as the califfs should be destitute of the piety of the *Moslems*, and the generosity of the *Greeks*. In consequence of this maxim, he was extremely regular in all the duties of his religion, and made the *Koran* the rule of his decisions and actions. He was a generous pay-master to all the public creditors; a father to his soldiers, who were, by far, the finest troops in the world; and, when the good of his people required it, he was magnificent. He built a wall round the city of *Cufa*; one mosque at *Medina*, and another at *Jerusalem*. Every *Friday* night he distributed the public-money to his subjects, according to their necessities, and merits. By this means, no prince was ever better served, by troops and generals, than he was. At the time of his death his armies were numerous, and in excellent condition. His conquests comprehended all *Syria*, and *Egypt*; almost all *Persia*, *Barka*, *Tripoli*, *Korasan*, the greatest part of *Armenia*; besides a great number of countries and territories, of less fame and importance. But the great public work that distinguished *Omar's* reign, was his building the city of *Basra*, at the mouth of the *Tygris*; through which, by means of the *Persian* gulf, he opened a communication with *India* itself. *Omar* was the first who established the *Mahometan* way of calculating by the years from the *Hejra*.

The reign of Othman, the third califf.

OTHMAN entered upon his government, about the year of our Lord 645, or the twenty-fourth of the *Hejra*. He was called *Othman* the son of *Fan*, and his first military exploits were, his perfecting those conquests in *Persia* and *Mesopotamia*, which had been left unfinished by his predecessor. *Hamadan*, one of the finest territories in *Persia*, and

the antient *Ecbatana*, was entirely reduced by him, as was the fortress of *Bira* in *Mesopotamia*, a place of great strength, which never had been subdued by *Omar*. Those conquests were atchieved by *Mogheirah*, while *Abu Musa* penetrated farther into the provinces of *Ispahan*, and took the city *Ra-ya*, one of the most antient in *Persia*.

Successes
of the
Arabs un-
der him.

While *Mogheirah* was thus successfully pushing the *Moslem* conquests in *Persia*, *Amru* was equally prosperous in *Egypt*, and *Moawiah* in *Syria*. For the reader is to understand, that tho' those countries had been in a manner totally subdued, yet so fickle were the constitutions of the inhabitants, and so many of them had a hankering after their old masters, that they were perpetually revolting. But *Moawiah* this year not only reduced them, but carried his conquests and devastations into the imperial territories.

Amru re-
moved
from his
govern-
ment
but is re-
placed,

It was about this time that *Othman* the califf gave a signal proof of the sagacity of *Omar* in characterising him to be a man too partial in favour of his relations, for he dismissed *Amru* from the government of *Egypt*, and gave it to his kinsman *Abdallah*, whom some call his foster-brother. *Amru* had the genius of the *Arabs*, and had great sentiments of politeness and humanity. He was looked upon as one of the most finished generals of his time, and extremely agreeable to the *Egyptians*, whose character and constitutions he had thoroughly studied. The dispossessing him therefore of his command, bad fair to ruin the affairs of the califf in *Egypt*; as it disobliged the *Egyptians* to such a degree, that the *Greek* emperor formed a scheme for repossessing himself of *Alexandria*. *Constans*, the grandson of *Heraclius*, was at this time emperor of the *Greeks*, and he employed one of his generals, named *Manuel*, (but whether he was the same *Manuel* already mentioned we cannot say) in the recovery of *Alexandria*. It appears that ever since *Amru* had taken it, the *Greeks* who escaped on board their ships, had kept the sea, and had a correspondence with their countrymen in that city, and this facilitated *Manuel's* expedition so much, that without much difficulty he made himself master of the city. This success however seems to have been greatly facilitated by the avarice of *Abdallah*, the *Moslem* general, who succeeded *Amru*, and who invaded the territories of a neighbouring *African* prince, whom he put to death, and carried off his treasures; besides putting to death a great many of his subjects, and obliging those that survived to pay an annual tribute. It was probably during *Abdallah's* absence upon this expedition, that *Manuel* made his descent upon *Alexandria*. But, be that as it will, it is certain that the *Copts*, or native *Egyptians*, who, in hatred to the *Greeks*, continued to be attached to the *Moslem* government, petitioned *Othman*, that *Amru's* command in *Egypt*, should be immediately restored to him. The califf, convinced of the imprudence of removing him, complied

He re-
takes *A-*
lexandria.

complied with their request, and *Amru* returned to *Egypt*, where he was joined by great numbers of the *Copts*, who furnished him with every thing requisite for retaking *Alexandria*: *Mokawkas* particularly was eminently useful to him; but he seems to have met with a greater resistance than he expected: for when he advanced towards *Alexandria*, the *Greeks*; who by this time had been greatly reinforced, gave him battle for three days successively, and it was with the utmost difficulty, that he drove them back into that city. It was upon this occasion that we are told he made the famous vow, That, if he was successful against *Alexandria*, he would dismantle the city, and make it as accessible as a bawdy house. At last he carried it by storm, but far from making the usual, and inhuman use of his success, he rushed amongst the soldiers as they were butchering the citizens, and ordered the carnage to cease. He afterwards, that he might leave to his countrymen a memorial of so clement an action, ordered a mosque to be built, on the very place where he stopt the slaughter, and called it the *Mosque of mercy*. We are told by some authors, that, in consequence of his vow; he ordered the city to be entirely dismantled of its walls and fortifications; and if that is true, those that are now to be seen about *Alexandria*, as we have already observed, must have been erected since the days of *Amru*. But the chief reason, why we think they have not, is, that, according to the best accounts, many of which are from authors of great truth and accuracy, none of the Mahometans in *Africa* were capable of erecting works of such stupendious, but elegant, construction. It is true, the *Arabs* of *Amru's* days, were scrupulous with regard to an oath; but *Amru* who was no common *Arab*, might very well satisfy his oath by pulling down some of the principal gates, and leaving it for some time as open as the house of a strumpet (to use his own expression). It is besides difficult to reconcile the entire demolition of the walls and fortifications of *Alexandria* to the general rule of policy observed by the *Arabs*; neither is it likely, as we find it was afterwards the seat of the *Moslem* government in *Egypt*, that *Amru* would venture upon a matter of such consequence, without consulting the califf: but, be all this as it will, it is certain, that the *Greek* general was obliged to fly with precipitation to his ships, and from thence to *Constantinople*; and left *Alexandria* entirely in the power of the *Arabs*.

His clemency.

Conjecture.

Yazdegerd, the unfortunate king of *Persia*, who had taken refuge in the most remote part of his dominions, began about this time again to appear in the field, and had made himself master of *Istachra*. Upon this, *Othman* sent two generals, *Abdallah* and *Said*, to make an entire conquest of *Korasan*: and, to encourage their diligence, he promised to confer the government of that noble country upon the first of them who should reach the enemy. They soon stripped

Defeat and death of *Yazdegerd* king of *Persia*.

Yazdejerd of all the places that had been left him of his great dominions, and hunting him about from place to place, he was obliged to apply to *Tarchan*, a prince of the *Turks*, at that time an obscure barbarous people, for succour. *Tarchan* accordingly marched a body of troops to his assistance, but *Yazdejerd* preposterously thinking himself to be still upon the throne of *Persia*, treated the barbarian with such impolitic haughtiness, that he withdrew his forces from *Yazdejerd's* assistance: but soon after, by the instigation of *Mahwa*, a *Persian* traitor, he returned and gave battle to *Yazdejerd*, who was finally defeated, and killed in the pursuit. By his death the empire of *Persia* fell without competition into the hands of the *Arabs*, about the thirty-first year of the *Hejra*, answering to the year of our Lord 651.

Moawiyah continued at *Damascus*, and those two great men were at this time, under the califf, the pillars of the *Moslem* government. It seems to have been a maxim with the *Arabs*, never to suffer their troops to remain long unemployed; and accordingly we find no sooner one conquest finished by them, than another is begun. *Moawiyah* threw his eyes upon the island of *Cyprus*, at that time under the languid effeminate government of the *Greeks*, and actually made a descent upon that island. The authors who have treated of those times have been most excusably negligent in transmitting particulars to posterity. All we know is from certain rough touches, which mark the principal events but leave them unconnected by the means that brought them about. *Moawiyah's* attempt, for instance, upon *Cyprus*, could not have been effected without shipping; and, excepting those that fell into the hands of the *Moslems* upon the taking of *Antioch*, we know of none they had. It is however certain that, tho' the *Arabs* at this time cannot be, properly termed a maritime power, yet they certainly had abundance of ships; for we are told that *Moawiyah* embarked his troops for *Cyprus* on board one thousand seven hundred sail. We are told, that, having made himself master of *Salamis*, the islanders capitulated to divide the revenues of the island equally between him, or rather the califf, and the *Greek* emperor; by which *Moawiyah* for two years received each year seven thousand two hundred pieces of gold; but that afterwards *Cyprus* fell again into the hands of the *Christians*. This is an event not easily to be accounted for, but by supposing the *Christians* to have been so greatly superior at sea to the *Arabs*, by the bulk of their ships, that *Moawiyah* was afraid of being shut up in the island, by having his small transports destroyed. For we are told that upon his hearing an imperial general was preparing to rescue the island, he set sail for *Aradus*, where he endeavoured, but unsuccessfully, to make himself master of the chief city of the island. It appears, however, that, tho' he was obliged to abandon this undertaking, yet he soon after appeared

appeared against the place with a larger fleet, and forced both it and *Ancyra* to submit ; and, that to punish the obstinacy of the inhabitants of *Aradus*, he burnt down their chief town. But all those transactions are so confusedly and inaccurately transmitted to us, that we should not have mentioned them, had it not been that we are certain they are true in the main, and that we are obliged to glean up every particular relating to so extraordinary a people as the *Arabs* then were.

While *Moawiyah* was subduing *Aradus*, *Isaurica* was plundered by the *Moslems*, who carried off five thousand captives along with them : and *Othman*'s arms under *Abdallah* penetrated into *Nubia* itself, where the prince, who was a Christian, was obliged to buy his peace, by promising to send yearly to the *Arab* governor of *Egypt*, a great number of *Nubian* or *Ethiopian* slaves, who seem to have been in vast request amongst the *Arabs*. It is however uncertain, whether *Abdallah*, when he made this impression upon *Nubia*, had been restored by *Othman* to the government of *Egypt*. Perhaps he acted as a kind of viceroy, under *Amru*, while the latter was employed in other conquests.

The *Arabs*
conquer
Isaurica.

We have now, thro' the dark paths of history, stumbled into the thirty-first year of the *Hejra*, or rather into the year 951 of Christ, which is a more certain reckoning ; and consequently into the twenty-eighth year after the impostor *Mahomet* had established his sovereignty at *Medina*. It is wonderful to think, how the artful impostures of that false prophet were supported, and even gained credit, during the two reigns that immediately succeeded him. But the delusion begun now to lose its force. *Othman*, tho' as fortunate as either of his predecessors, was not so virtuous ; and consequently not so great a prince in their eyes. He loved money, and therefore they began to consider him as a man. The prediction of *Omar* concerning his partiality to his relations being public, operated likewise to his prejudice ; and, when his weak side was discovered, many of his greatest subjects, began to look upon him in no better light than a usurper of a power, which they had as good, if not a better, right than he had. One *Abudar* was the first who vented his discontent ; which he did in such unguarded terms that *Othman* obliged him to retire to *Syria* ; where he continued his invectives with so much rancour, that *Moawiyah*, the prefect of *Syria*, sent him in custody to *Medina*, where, by *Othman*'s order, he was confined in prison to the time of his death, which happened about a year after his committment.

A. D 651

Failings
of *Oth-*
man.

Othman strove to stifle those seeds of discontent, which he saw daily increasing, by continuing his conquests. His troops under *Habib* and other generals renewed their incursions into *Mesopotamia* and *Armenia*, where they committed great ravages ; and *Moawiyah* had been so industrious in

Conspira-
cy against
him.

collecting a fleet, that *Abu Abar*, the admiral under him, engaged the *Greek* admiral on the coast of *Lycea*, and gave him a most dreadful defeat. About the same time, *Moawiyah* himself invaded the island of *Rhodes*, and seized the brazen *Colossus* so celebrated for being one of the wonders of the world, which had been thrown down eight hundred and seventy years before, by an earthquake, and had remained upon the ground ever since. The materials of this wonderful statue, we are told, were sold to a Jew of *Edefah*, and they loaded nine hundred camels. Thus the spoils which escaped the rapaciousness even of the *Romans*, were plundered by the *Arabs*. In the mean while, it is difficult to account, why this stupendious monument of art never was re-erected during so long a time.

Charge
against
him.

But all those successes and acquisitions were unable to quiet the spirit of discontent and rebellion which had gone forth against *Othman* and his government. They went so far at last, that they were digested into a kind of regular charge against him; and, as the articles of that charge contained several particulars, not mentioned by historians, it may be proper to mention the heads of them here. First, he had recalled *Hekam*, who had been banished by the prophet, and had continued in exile during the califat's of *Abubeker* and *Omar*. Secondly, he had displaced *Said*, one of his best generals, and given his command to *Okba*, a man who drank wine, and was in other respects a vicious person. Thirdly, he was accused of being too profuse of the public money; and, amongst many instances given of that profusion, it was said that he gave five hundred and four thousand dinars to *Merwan*, (the same secretary, who afterwards betrayed him, and four hundred thousand to *Abdallah*;) besides large sums to other favourites. Fourthly, he was charged with having dismissed *Anru*, to whom the public owed so much from the government of *Egypt*; and bestowing it upon *Abdallah*, who had been proscribed by the prophet. Fifthly, he had placed himself, when he spoke to the people, upon that part of *Mahomet's* pulpit where the prophet himself used to sit; tho' *Abubeker* used to place himself one step, and *Omar* two steps, lower.

The squandering the public money seemed of all those charges to bear the hardest upon *Othman*; but at first he had spirit enough to justify from the pulpit what he had done, and to pray God's vengeance upon them, who should dispute his right of disposing of the money in the treasury as he pleased. *Ammar*, an *Arab* in great reputation, for his sufferings for Islamism, and for the high favour he was in with the prophet, complained that the califf's speech, had given him just and great offence; upon which *Ammar*, by *Othman's* orders, was beat so severely that he fainted away. The inflammable disposition of the *Arabs*, at this treatment of so eminent a personage, immediately took fire; and the rebels

bels running to arms, gathered to a head, and encamped within three miles of *Medina*.

Othman behaved with great despondency on this occasion, He submits. but that might be owing to his receiving intelligence that the insurrection was gathering strength, from all the neighbouring provinces, *Egypt* in particular, who were pouring in deputies into *Medina*, to complain of his administration. In order to bring the insurgents to some temper, he again repaired to the mosque, and, from the pulpit, he fairly owned all the circumstances of his misgovernment, and promised, not only to amend the same for the future, but to restore to the public treasury, all the money he had taken from it. But the unhappy *Othman* seems to have been ignorant, on this occasion, that when a prince submits to rebels, he increases their insolence; for they now grew more outrageous than ever; nor indeed does he seem to have had a real friend about him. He was, however, saved, by a concurrence of interests, though all of them directly opposite to him. For *Ayesha*, who, by the staunch *Moslems*, was now called the mother of the faithful, and in high veneration with them, intended to raise *Telha* to the califat. This being known to *Ali*, though he equally hated *Othman*, he resolved, if possible, to save him; rather than that his professed enemy, *Ayesha*, should gain her ends. With this view, he repaired to *Othman*, who had just before ineffectually employed *Mogeirah* to appease the insurrection, with a paper, in which he had drawn up the principal grievances of the government. This paper, at his earnest request, was signed by *Othman*, with a promise of removing them; and *Ali*, by way of guaranty for the performance of that promise, signed it at the same time.

Ali, as the reader may have already observed, was the only person, perhaps, in all the califf's dominions, who could counterballance the credit of *Ayesha*; and the minds of the *Moslems* were, undoubtedly, greatly divided between them. They are appeased by *Ali*. *Ali* succeeded on this occasion, for *Ayesha*, who seems to have been a woman of great intrigue and resolution, did not venture to declare openly against *Othman*, for fear that *Ali* (as afterwards happened,) whom she hated much more should succeed him. Add to this, the terms signed by *Othman* were so plausible, that, when recommended by *Ali*, they could not be rejected. The conspirators, therefore, seemed to rest satisfied with *Ali*'s mediation; and the insurrection, for some time, seemed to be at an end; all the insurgents departing to their several homes.

Amongst other stipulations agreed to by *Othman*, one was, Treachery of *Merwan*, that *Mohammed*, the son of *Abu Beker*, should be appointed to the government of *Egypt*, instead of *Abdallah*; and this point being settled, *Mohammed* was upon his return to the secretary. *Egypt*, when he intercepted a courier with dispatches from the califf. Those dispatches were addressed to *Abdallah*, the

the then acting governor of *Egypt*, and contained, under the seal, and in the name, of the califf, a peremptory order for *Abdallah* to cut off the hands and the feet of *Mohammed's* friends, and impale them, as soon as they came into *Egypt*. But this order, we are told, was a most detestable forgery of *Merwan*, *Othman's* secretary, who thereby finished his master's destruction. For *Mohammed*, not doubting of the authenticity of the order, immediately proclaimed the califf's breach of faith to all his friends in the province, and marched back to *Medina*, at the head of a strong body of troops.

Othman
assassinat-
ed in his
palace.

Notwithstanding this is the account given by the authors who were mostly to be depended on, yet we cannot help observing, that it was highly improbable, if *Othman* was entirely innocent of this barbarous order, that he should not have been able to have detected the treason, between the time of its being intercepted, and his death. For we are told that *Mohammed*, upon his returning to *Medina*, being joined by a considerable body of malecontents from *Cufa*, *Basra*, and other places, blockaded the califf for fifteen, some say eighteen, days, in his own palace. During all this time, he held a kind of a treaty with the rebels, through the mediation of *Ali*; who ordered his sons, *Hasan*, and *Hosein*, to prevent the rebels from breaking into the palace. It is likewise said, that the califf, finding himself, in a manner, deserted by all, applied to *Ali* for his assistance; and asked him, Whether he chose to see his kinsman murdered, and the empire, which would probably descend to himself, dismembered? The answer of *Ali* was, That he did not. Upon the whole, therefore, there seems to be reason to believe that order, attributed to the treachery of *Merwan*, was the genuine deed of *Othman*; for we know of no attempt he made to clear himself. The blockade continuing, the califf found himself greatly distressed for water; and *Hasan*, and *Hosein*, no doubt with the consent of their father, withdrawing their assistance, the rebels broke into the palace; (if the mean house in which the califfs lived in those days, can deserve that name). *Mohammed*, the head of the rebels, and two others, immediately went to *Othman's* apartment, where they found him sitting with a copy of the Koran, which, by this time, was collected and published, in his bosom. *Mohammed*, without regard to his dignity, seized him by the beard, and stabbed him in the breast; and his example was followed by other conspirators, who, by this time, had broke into the room, each of them being solicitous to have his sword dipt in the blood of the califf. The wife of *Othman*, endeavouring to interpose, to save her husband, had her fingers cut off by the assassins. The body lay for some days unburied, and was thrown into a hole, rather than a grave;

grave, in the thirty-fourth year of the Hejra, answering to Hejra 34. the year of our Lord 655.

Thus, without one struggle, fell the greatest prince, in His cha- point of power, in the world, aged thirty-two. We here rather, and cannot help observing, the terrible effects which a plen- that of the- itude of power has upon the morals of mankind. Those *Arab* go- *Arabs*, who, during the time they were making their con- vernment, quests, were humble, modest, and unambitious, finding at the time the prize they fought for gained, began now to separate, of his and, like the *Roman* prætorian guards, to give law to their death. emperors. *Ali*, who from *Mahomet* inherited courage, en- thusiasm, and abstinence, seems to have been no longer proof against ambition. Though he had, ever since the death of that impostor, secretly looked upon all who suc- ceeded him, as usurpers; yet he had served them faithfully and zealously. But the prize of empire, which, through the failings of *Othman*, was now in his reach, overpower- ed his virtue. All that he did was to save appearances, by the faint assistance he gave the califf: but even, this did not impose upon the public, as will be seen in the course of this history.

The virtues of *Othman* were the same with those of the other illustrious *Arabs* of his time; and his failings were such as are incident to mankind. He was personally sober, temperate, religious, and brave; for the *Arabs*, at that time, knew not what a coward was. But he seems to have been ruined by his partiality to his relations, and favourites. The vices of his court and country are the true marks, by which we can estimate the incredibly swift progress the power of the *Arabs* had made, during so short a space as thirty years; it was such, as seems to render history ro- mance. But the intelligent reader is not to confound the progress of the *Arabs*, with those rapid conquests that have been made by others; and which commonly vanished with the lives of the conquerors. The followers of *Mahomet* were far from depending on the sword for the security of their acquisitions. The conquests they made were incor- porated into their own plan of policy, both religious and civil. The few desires and appetites they had to gratify, rendered it easy for them to make the people under them abundantly more happy, than they were under their for- mer governors; and this conciliated, first, their affections, and then, their consciences, to the *Moslem* government. That the *Arabs*, in point of learning, arts, and sciences, were, at this time, barbarous, is certain; but it is as cer- tain, that they possessed the characteristics of a people formed for command, in a greater degree than the *Romans* ever did. They knew the advantages they had, from ig- norance, superstition, inconsistency, and division in reli- gion; and they improved them so amazingly, that the vice of ambition, excited by real power, made a greater pro- gress

gress amongst them in thirty years, than it did amongst the *Romans* in six hundred ; and to this vice it was that *Othman*, whose reign we now close, fell a sacrifice.

The reign of Ali, the fourth califf.

Ali succeeds to the califat.

Reflection upon his accession,

and upon the constitution of the government.

TH E R E is nothing in all the history we now undertake, more unaccountable, than that *Ali* should have been kept out of the califat so long as he was. He was the favourite son-in-law, and nephew, of *Mahomet*; he resembled him in his enthusiasm, his abilities, his virtues, and even his vices; and he had the merit of being the first male convert to that impostor's faith. But, as we have had occasion to observe, *Ali* had the misfortune to declare too publicly his belief of the incontinency of *Ayesha*, the mother of the faithful; and her intrigues and power had hitherto defeated him of the califat. But she was too exquisite a politician to think of withstanding the torrent that then ran so strongly in his favour. She had now taught the *Arabs* that their califfs were fallible, vulnerable, and mortal; and she foresaw the prodigious advantages she might reap, from the divisions of the empire, and the part that *Ali* had acted in the catastrophe of *Othman*. *Medina*, and its neighbourhood, was, at this time, filled with troops, which the rebellion against the late califf had brought from all quarters of his vast empire. Though both *Telha* and *Zobeir* had great interest, by means of *Ayesha's* credit, yet it was insignificant, compared to that of *Ali*; who seems, on the other hand, to have been fully apprized of the party that had been secretly formed against him; for, notwithstanding the most pressing instances, made to him even by *Ayesha's* party, to take upon him the government, he, for some time, absolutely declined it. From the complexion of the history, I am inclined to believe, that those applications were made to him, during the life of *Othman*. For we are told, he resisted them so long, that the army gave the people of *Medina* to understand, that if within twenty-four hours a califf was not appointed, they would put *Ali*, *Telha*, *Zobeir*, and the principal persons in the government, to the sword; and yet, that *Ali* was recognized as califf, on the very day of *Othman's* death.

Be this as it will, it is certain, that he had discovered, apparently, great reluctance, to take upon him the government; declaring he was ready faithfully to obey any one that should be appointed califf. It is here that we cannot sufficiently admire the constitution of the *Arab* government, in point of succession to the califat. By all that appears, it was neither hereditary, nor elective; or, if it was elective,

we

We know of no particular body, in which the right of election was vested. All that appears is, that when a person was nominated to be califf, the sentiments of the people in general were consulted; and if they were in his favour, the chief men swore allegiance to him; and the body of the subjects acquiesced in what they did. After this recognition, however, there were particular acts, such as haranguing the people from the prophet's pulpit, and giving them solemn benedictions, that stamp upon them the character of sovereignty: and those acts formed the true charter, by which they reigned.

That a universal, or, at least, a general, recognition, was necessary to make a califf, seems to be implied by *Ali's* conduct, when he was elected. For he insisted upon his being solemnly inaugurated in the mosque of *Medina*, by which inauguration we can understand nothing, but his performing such acts of sovereignty, as we have already mentioned, before all the people. *Telha's* and *Zobeir's* fear of the army was so great, that they adjured him by God, and as he loved God, the prophet, and religion, to take upon him the government without delay. He is inaugurated solemnly.

Next day being agreed on for the inauguration of the greatest prince in the world, he went from his own house to the mosque, attired in a thin cotton gown, tied round his waist with a girdle; his slippers in one hand, a bow, which he made use of as a walking staff, in the other; and a coarse turban on his head; walking all the way on foot. Such is the picture the *Moslem* authors give us of this mighty monarch, on an occasion that other monarchs would have exhausted all that was magnificent in art and nature, to adorn it. But the head of the *Arabs* had all his greatness within himself; and his people considered that grandeur, which others court, as the bitterness of the human mind. Picture of his manner of going to be inaugurated.

When *Ali* arrived at the mosque, he sent for *Telha* and *Zobeir*, to recognize his authority; as being leaders in the government. The *Arabs*, with all their quickness, and all the elevated images they had of divinity, were superstitious; and, perhaps, their superstition was owing to those very qualities, because they were unsupported by true philosophy. *Telha* was the first who offered his hand to the califf, and it being shrunk up, through a wound he had formerly received, one *Habib*, an *Arab*, who was by, proposed that the allegiance paid to *Ali* should be retracted, because the business must be lame, which was begun by a lame hand. In fact, there was more foundation than *Ali* apprehended for this observation. The house of *Ommiyah*, the head of which was *Mowiyah*, then governor of *Syria*, *Merwan*, *Said*, and other considerable leaders of the *Arabs*, refused, or at least declined, to recognize *Ali*. This formidable defection, was occasioned by the arts of *Ayesha*, who now loudly declared Instance of the superstition of the *Arabs*.

clared herself against the murderers of *Othman*, at the head of whom she placed *Ali* himself.

Character of *Ali*, and his great resolution: *Ali* was not a man to be daunted by any opposition. Perhaps the great courage, discernment, and resolution, he possessed, deterred the principal *Arabs* so long from advancing him to the sovereignty. He was well acquainted with the characters and dispositions of all the generals under the late califf, and he resolved to remove every one of them. This was, a very unseasonable resolution, but *Ali* was unsusceptible of fear, and was resolved to hold the califat upon no precarious terms. It had, however, a very disagreeable effect upon his interest, because it increased the public suspicion of his having been active, or at least an accessory, in the murder of *Othman*. One of the friends of *Mogheirah*, at first, endeavoured to divert him from this resolution, but finding him determined, he seemed to change his opinion, and he advised him to persist in it. While they were conversing upon this subject, *Abdallah* came into their company. He had been lately at *Mecca*, and knew perfectly well the state of parties all over the empire. Being informed of the subject of their conversation, he highly approved of *Mogheirah's* first advice, but condemned his change of opinion, which he called downright treason. He observed, that *Moawiyah*, having never recognized *Ali's* authority, had some excuse for his disaffection; but, that he did not doubt, if he was continued in his government, he would take the oath of allegiance, as others had done. "In that case," continued *Abdallah*, "if he shall rebel, he will be a traitor, and he will become so odious, that, should you desire it, I, myself, will engage to pull him out of his house by his ears." This, certainly, was sound advice. *Moawiyah*, besides being one of the greatest subjects, by birth, the califf had, was possessed of the best government in his empire, and the army under him, which was a very fine one, was at his devotion. But *Ali* considered him as a rebel, and swore by God, That the portion of *Moawiyah* should be the sword. *Mogheirah* seems to have changed to opinion, only in complaisance to him, in whose power he then was. For, upon *Ali's* declaring, that he persisted in putting *Moawiyah* to death, *Abdallah* honestly told him, That his conduct was not equal to his courage, which was unquestionably great: and soon after *Mogheirah* withdrew to *Mecca*, where the opposition to *Ali's* government was now come to a great height.

Conduct of *Ayesha*. The artful *Ayesha*, to whose intrigues the murder of *Othman* was chiefly owing, did not deny her having been his enemy at first; but she pretended, that upon seeing his reformation, she had become his friend, and that *Ali* had been guilty of treason, by the part he acted in his assassination. This declaration coming from the mother of the faithful, had a vast effect upon many; and

Moawiyah.

Moawiyah, finding it coincide with his interest, appeared to believe it implicitly. *Telha*, and *Zobeir*, if they could have avoided it, would willingly have declined declaring themselves against him, till matters were more ripe. For this purpose, one of them solicited the government of *Cufa*, and the other, that of *Basra*; but *Ali*, sensible of their intentions, pretended he could not dispense with their absence, at so critical a conjuncture; their abilities and experience being far superior to all those he had about him. They easily comprehended his meaning as he had done theirs: they were then obliged to apply the never-failing battery of religion; and begged leave to go to *Mecca* upon a pilgrimage. This pretext was too sacred for *Ali* to withstand it, and he consented, though he knew that *Ayesha* was there at the very time, forming cabals against his person and authority.

Notwithstanding this formidable appearance against him, *Ali* still proceeded in forming the new system of government he had laid down. He dispatched *Sabel* to take upon him the government of *Syria*, in the place of *Moawiyah*; and this seems to have been the first measure that determined *Moawiyah* openly to take arms against the califf. For *Sabel*, upon his arriving on the borders of *Syria*, was met by a party detached from *Moawiyah*, which forced him to return to *Ali* for further orders. The califf appointed *Kois* to be governor of *Egypt*, but his subjects there were in such a ferment, that many of them refused to obey his government, till such time as justice was executed upon the murderers of the late califf. *Othman*, the son of *Hariff*, was sent to take possession of *Basra*, which he did with great difficulty; but the *Cufians* peremptorily refused to submit themselves to *Ammarah*, whom *Ali* had appointed for their governor. *Abdallah* was sent to take upon him the government of *Yaman*, the *Arabia Felix* of the ancients; but *Yali*, who had been appointed governor of that province by *Othman*, plundered the public treasury, and carried the money to the rebels at *Mecca*.

Moawiyah, after driving *Sabel* out of *Syria*, remained unmolested in his government, and made use of his vast credit and interest, to inspire the people under him with a detestation of *Ali*. He had got into his possession the bloody shirt in which *Othman* had been murdered, to which were affixed the fingers of *Othman's* wife, and all together were exposed to the public view. The *Arabs* made a better use of their pulpits and mosques, than the *Romans* did of their rostrum, or forum; because, amongst the *Arabs*, religion and politics always went hand in hand, and always assisted each other. The display of *Othman's* bloody shirt, and his wife's fingers, from had an incredible effect upon the minds of the people, and in a few days a great army arranged itself, under the banner of the bloody shirt.

He proposes terms

which are rejected.

Leaders and heads of the rebellion against him.

Ayesha marches at the head of the insurgents,

Ali began now to perceive that the conspiracy against him threatened his life and empire. He sent to propose terms of accommodation to *Abu Musa*, the governor of *Cusa*; and to *Moawiyah*. The former seems to have accepted of them, but the latter, at first, expressed his contempt of them, by silence, and then by sending *Ali* a blank letter, as the most opprobrious expression he could devise, for his disregard of him. But we are told, that *Moawiyah*, about this time, was recognized, as califf, by the forces in *Syria*. The messenger who brought *Moawiyah*'s mock letter, was asked by the califf, news from *Syria*. His answer was, That sixty thousand men, in arms, were ready to act under the banner of *Othman*'s bloody shirt; which was erected upon the pulpit of a mosque at *Damascus*. *Ali* was startled at the mention of this shirt, but immediately comprehending the meaning of it, he blamed the insurgents for requiring the blood of *Othman* at his hands; and endeavoured to clear himself by the most bitter imprecations, of his having had any hand in his murder.

But the seat of rebellion, all this time, lay at *Mecca*; and *Ayesha* was the main-spring of it. *Telha*, and *Zobeir*, encouraged her to persist in it, by representing the affairs of the califf, as being, in a manner, desperate at *Medina*. But the plan of their operations was not yet fixed. Had they agreed to the promotion of *Moawiyah* to the califat, their interest, undoubtedly, led them to have marched into *Syria*; where they could have joined their own forces with his. *Ayesha*, who seems to have been a better politician than any about her, was for instantly taking advantage of the embarrassment of the califf's affairs; and for marching directly to *Medina*. This proposal seems to have been diverted by *Telha*, whose interest at *Basra* was so considerable, that the conspirators determined to march to that city, and dispositions were made accordingly, but he found the people very backward to join him,

We are, in relating the history of the *Arabs*, to make the same distinction between the native, veteran, *Arabs*, and their other troops, as between the *Roman* legionary soldiers, and those collected in their conquered provinces. *Ayesha*, when she set out from *Mecca*, was at the head of not above one thousand men, but all of them were true *Arabs*, and equal in valour to ten times the number of provincial troops. Their being headed by the mother of the faithful, gave them inexpressible courage and spirits; and in her march to *Basra*, their numbers amounted to three thousand. She was mounted upon a camel, that cost about eighty guineas; and, it seems, knew how to kneel and stoop, at command; a circumstance which the *Arabs* considered as a proof of the rider's sanctity. Being unused to the fatigues of a campaign, she wanted to stop at a village upon the road; and her obstinacy was such, that *Telha*, and *Zobeir*, knowing the bad consequences of delay, were obliged to have recourse

course to a most solemn lie, which is recounted, with many immaterial, ridiculous circumstances, to divert her. But even this expedient would not have got the better of her resolution, had it not been for a false alarm, which they spread, as if *Ali's* army was advancing to attack them. This rumour had the desired effect, and her troops proceeded to *Basra*. This town, as we have already seen, was held for *Ali*, by *Othman*, the son of *Hanif*; who was greatly embarrassed how to behave. The revenge of *Othman's* death, was the pretext made use of by the rebels; and *Ayesha*, by repeated messengers, had required him to rejoin her in revenging it. *Othman* sent to *Ali* for instructions how to behave, and the califf ordered him to treat those under *Ayesha*, particularly *Telha*, and *Zobeir*, as perjured rebels. But the match was equal. The vast authority of the mother of the faithful had now assembled thirty thousand men under her banners; and the troops under *Othman* were but a handful. He made, however, a brave resistance, but takes *Basra* the insurgents taking post near *Basra*, defeated him, in a *ra*. fally he made, took him prisoner, and sent him to *Ayesha*, who was now mistress of his fate. She treated him with great contempt, though at first she was inclined to have taken off his head; but milder councils prevailing, she ordered him to receive forty stripes, the hair of his eyebrows, and his beard, to be pulled out by the roots, and himself to be dismissed. *Ayesha* thus becoming mistress of *Basra*, laid her hands upon the califf's treasure there, which greatly strengthened her party.

Ali was disconcerted, but not daunted, at the progress *Ali* marches a- of this rebellion. He made his appeal to the people, that he had been fairly inaugurated, as califf, by the ansars, gainst her, to whom he had paid the compliment of being the electors of the califf. This seasonable artifice did him great service. But he found, that the impression which the murder of *Othman*, which he was accused of, made upon the minds of the people, did him infinite prejudice. For though he formally declared, from the pulpit, that the rebels were in motion, and that he resolved to fight them, he found his subjects very backward to join him.

An expedient however was found out to remove their prepossessions. *Ziyad*, one of the ansars, and his friend, spontaneously stepped up to him, and declared that, retreat who would, he and his family would advance. This perhaps would have been insufficient to have determined the ansars, had not two of their doctors of the law formally stood up in the assembly, and declared that the holy *Othman*, master of the two testimonies, was not put to death by the master of the he is cleared from two testimonies. This ceremonious verdict had its due effect. By the two testimonies is understood the two hinges *Othman's* of the *Moslem* faith; That there is but one God, and *Mahomet* is his prophet; and the califf in being was denominated by the appellation of the master of the two testimonies so

so that upon the whole the decision of the two doctors, implied no more than that *Othman* was not murdered by *Ali*. The *Anfars* who composed the assembly, having so solemn a decision on their side, unanimously determined to support the califf; and *Omu Salma*, who *Mahomet* had married as his seventh wife, declared herself loudly in favour of *Ali*. This unanimous resolution of the *Anfars* to support the califf was of infinite service to his affairs, and he marched out of *Medina*, with nine hundred men, whom the reader is to remember were *Anfars*, that is, all of them lions. His first march was to *Arrabdah* and there he was joined by his son *Hasan*, at the head of another body of troops, and by great numbers of people from all quarters of *Arabia*, whom the example of the *Anfars*, had determined to join him. We are told, upon this occasion that *Hasan* reproached his father for several imprudent steps he had made, and which have already been touched upon, but that *Ali* cleared himself from all imputation of misconduct.

by which
his party
gathers
strength.

The great points of dispute at this time, between *Ali* and the insurgents, were, whether *Ali* was guilty of the murder of *Othman*, and whether *Telha* and *Zobeir*, had sworn allegiance to him, voluntarily or by compulsion. *Ali*, by the decision of the *Anfars*, cleared himself pretty well of the charge against him. But the point was more doubtful with regard to *Telha* and *Zobeir* who, with their friends, affected to give out that they were compelled to recognize *Ali* as califf. They were not however very successful in gaining proselites. *Ali*'s party, notwithstanding all *Ayesha*'s efforts, gathered strength every day while he lay with his army at *Arabdah*. His moderation did him great service on this occasion, he wrote to the *Cuffians* exhorting them to endeavour to persuade the *Motazalites*, for so *Ayesha*'s party was called, to lay down their arms, and he was very earnest in all the public acts of devotion, declaring at the same time that he was ready to come to an accommodation with the rebels and very unwilling to shed *Moslem* blood. Two tribes while he lay at *Arabdah*, that of *Tay* and that of *Afed*, and both of them of great consequence, joined him, but he dismissed the latter tho' not without great acknowledgements of their zeal and loyalty.

He gains
possession
of *Cufa*.

Ali now perceived there was a necessity of proceeding to extremities with the rebels who had actually declared him to be deposed from the califat, and that the *Anfars* themselves looked upon his moderation as weak and impolitic. He therefore sent for and received a farther supply of men, horses, and warlike accoutrements from *Medina*, but he met with some opposition at *Cufa* where the governor *Abu Musa* seemed inclined to favour *Ayesha*. But *Ali*'s messengers acted with so much zeal and spirit, in favour of *Ali*, that they soon formed a party amongst the people, and *Abu Musa* contented himself with declaring for a neutrality. *Cufa*,
however

however was a place of so much importance that *Ali* sent He gains his son *Hasan* and *Ashtar* an officer of great resolution to strip possession *Abu Musa* of his power, which in fact they did, and the *Cu-* of *Cufa*. *fans* sent about eight thousand excellent troops to *Ali*'s assistance. The caliph paid them the compliment of meeting them in person, and after bestowing the highest encomiums upon their courage and fidelity he again declared himself ready to come to an accommodation with the rebels, or chastise them should they continue in arms.

But *Ayesha*, equally proof against moderation and menaces, The battle continuing her warlike preparations in the neighbourhood of the of *Basra*, where the strength of her interest lay, the caliph began his march against her, and soon came in sight of her army. *Ali*, besides being a man of infinite resolution and courage, was at the head of about twenty-five thousand of the bravest troops in the world, and *Ayesha* commanded about thirty thousand, but they were raw and undisciplined. *Zobeir* would willingly have persuaded his party to an accommodation, being fully sensible of their weakness. But *Ali* himself, by this time seemed to have laid aside some of his pacific sentiments, tho' he would have gladly won *Zobeir* over to his interest, and had some conversation with him for that effect, tho' *Zobeir* would not abandon his party. We are told that even *Ayesha* was daunted at seeing the good order, and resolution of *Ali*'s troops, and would have willingly entered upon a treaty. It is very probable that this was what *Ali* was now desirous to avoid; and that he gave private orders to his generals to begin an attack in the night time which the *Cufans* accordingly did.

This hostility was such an indication of *Ali* being determined to put the issue upon the event of a battle, that we are told *Ayesha* grew desperate and mounting her celebrated camel she flew from rank to rank, to inspire her men with courage. As to *Zobeir* he expressed great remorse for the infidelity he had been guilty of towards *Ali*, and declared that the breach of his oath of fidelity lay so heavy upon his conscience, that he could not fight against him. But his son advised him to procure a dispensation from that oath by manumitting a *Moslem* slave which he accordingly did, and by that absurd evasion, which the *Koran* allows, he got rid of all his scruples. As to *Telha*, who was equally guilty, we know of none he entertained till after he was mortally wounded.

Ayesha, on the side of the rebels, was the heroine of the day, and she distinguished herself so much upon her camel, that the battle itself was denominated the day of the camel. The stress of the dispute lay about her beast, and we are told that no fewer than seventy men had their hands cut off in endeavouring to lay hold of his bridle. But notwithstanding the obstinacy of her resistance, her camel was at last hamstrung and the pavilion where she sat was brought to the ground, stuck so full of arrows and javelins, that it resembled a porcupine.

Death of cupine. In the mean while *Telha* was mortally wounded. *Telha* and by *Merwan*, and being carried off the field of battle he called to a follower of the califf, and putting his hand into his, thereby renewed the oath of fidelity he had formerly taken to him, and soon after expired, confessing the part he had had in *Othman's* death, and craving mercy for the same. As to *Zobier*, finding the day go against his party, he fled out of the field towards *Mecca*; but falling in with a body of free booters, under one *Hanaff* who was waiting for the result of the action that he might join the conqueror, he had his head struck off by one blow of a sabre as he was at prayers. The assassin, whose name was *Amrou*, expecting a great reward carried the head to *Ali*, who received him with execrations for what he had done, and bad him begone to hell. *Amrou* upon this, reproached *Ali* for being the evil genius of the Moslems, as dooming equally to hell those who fought for him and against him, and being stung with rage and disappointment he dispatched himself with his own sword.

Ali's moderation towards Ayesha.

Ali understanding that *Ayesha* was his prisoner, repaired to her in person, but far from insulting her, he ordered his sons *Hasan* and *Hosein* to attend her a days journey on her return to *Medina*, where, however he ordered her to confine herself to her house and to meddle no more in public affairs.

Thus ended the day of the camel by some called the battle of *Koraiba* from the place where it was fought. About seventeen thousand of the rebels were said to have been killed there, and only one thousand of *Ali's* troops; but some accounts of the battle, make the loss on the side of the rebels to have been much greater. Upon the whole, it is pretty evident that tho' the revenging *Othman's* death was the pretext for the insurrection, yet that the rebels were more guilty of it than *Ali*, who seems to have been blameable chiefly for not endeavouring, more vigorously than he did, to prevent it. Notwithstanding the silence of authors, *Ali* must have been guilty of that levity, which was charged upon him by *Omar*, or some other failing that was great in the eyes of the *Arabs*, since, notwithstanding his having both in point of zeal and service as well as relationship with the prophet, by far the greatest merit of any man in the eyes of all true Moslems, he was so long kept out of the califat, and when he obtained it, held it so precariously and dangerously. For tho' he had over thrown, he had not subdued *Ayesha*. When he waited upon her she loaded him with reproaches and notwithstanding his order that she should confine herself to her own house, he was obliged to agree to her performing a journey to *Mecca*, in which she seems to have raised him up new dangers.

Moawiyah continues For *Ali's* victory at *Koraibah*, was far from securing to him the peaceable possession of the califat. He had a dangerous rival in the person of *Moawiyah*, the chieftian of the house

house of *Ommehiah*, one of the most powerful in all *Arabia* and to arm a-governor of *Syria*. This province was the most antient gainst *Ali*. and the best secured of all the *Arab* conquests. The inhabitants in general were by this time zealous Mahometans, and having lived under a mild government, they as well as their army, were united in favour of *Moawiyah*. But before he published his pretensions upon the califat he thought proper to secure in his interest; *Amru* the conqueror of *Egypt*, and at this time the governor of *Palestine*. *Amru* had great causes of discontent against *Othman*, and he was not much in favour with *Ali*. He therefore, upon a promise of being restored to his government of *Egypt* repaired to *Moawiyah* at *Damascus*, and as had been previously concerted between them, he solemnly swore allegiance to him in presence of the people and the army, who unanimously followed his example.

Ali was no stranger to the danger, which this defection State of threatened to his person and government. He would wil- the parties lingly have entered into a negotiation with *Moawiyah* but in the field the latter rejected all his proposals not only with indifference but scorn. Upon this *Ali* ordered his army to assemble, and found they amounted to upwards of seventy thousand men, but the flower of the whole were the troops of *Irak* and the *Kajerites* who to the number of about twelve thousand had been principally concerned in the rebellion, which ended in *Othman's* death. These being the chief dependence of *Ali*, no doubt did him infinite prejudice with many sober Moslems; and it was very uneasy for himself to reflect that he was to owe his safety to men who paid him their allegiance only to secure themselves from the punishment threatened them by *Moawiyah*. Notwithstanding this discouragement, his character and the known proofs he had given of his moderation, brought most of the veterans of that part of his dominions that still remained in his allegiance, to his standard, and all the old companions, a name that every day was growing more and more venerable, declared in his favour, so that both his troops and generals were greatly superior to those of *Moawiyah*, whose dependence was chiefly upon *Amru*; tho' his army was more numerous than that of the califf.

An incident which is easily accounted for, did *Ali* infinite service during his march. The scarcity of water in the plains of *Arabia*, is well known, as is likewise the avidity with which the inhabitants are obliged to preserve and conceal it for fear of accidents. *Ali's* army happening to encamp in a place where the troops could find no water, was driven to great distress. In the neighbourhood of this camp in a cell under ground lived a hermit who we are told was a Christian, and possibly he might go under that denomination. To him *Ali*, naturally applied for information, whether any reservoirs of water were to be found in the neighbourhood, for the use of his army. The hermit at first told him of a few cisterns that did not contain above three or four tubs of water. This account did not satisfy *Ali*. He pretend-

Adventure of *Ali* and a pretended hermit.

ed that some of the old prophets having lived in that neighbourhood, had dug reservoirs or pits for water, that must still remain. The hermit, who upon the face of the narrative appears to have been secretly instructed by *Ali*, upon this owned, that there was in the neighbourhood according to antient tradition, such a reservoir shut up by a stone, but that it could be opened only by a prophet or one sent by a prophet. *Ali* was remarkable for being the strongest man in all his dominions. Nothing was more easy than to find out by the hermit's directions, the stone that shut up the mouth of the reservoir, and removing it with ease, the hermit fell down and worshipped him. The Moslem writers inform us of some other circumstances of this interview, which are so ridiculous as not to deserve a place in history. The whole appears plainly to have been an expedient happily and critically hit upon, and improved by *Ali*, for establishing his credit with his army, and nothing could be more easy than for him to carry it into execution. We are told the hermit never left him afterwards.

The battle of *Seffein*.

The distress of *Ali*'s army being thus removed, he marched forward to *Seffein*, where he understood *Moawiyah*'s army was encamped. As the possession of the greatest empire then in the world, was to be left to the decision of the sword, the dispute was obstinate, long and bloody. Both parties were every day strengthening themselves by fresh reinforcements, till at last *Ali*'s army amounted to ninety thousand, and *Moawiyah*'s to one hundred and twenty thousand fighting men. *Moawiyah* sensible with whom he had to deal, had fortified a strong pass that lay in *Ali*'s march. The califf detached *Ashtar*, the same who had secured *Cusa* to his interest, and one of the best officers of his army, to dislodge the party that held this post, and *Ashtar* executed his commission with the utmost courage and success.

When the two armies came in sight of one another, each general had his reasons for avoiding for some time a decisive action. It is probable that *Moawiyah* had the advantage of the situation; and it is plain, that the moderation of *Ali* sought all opportunities to gain over the opposite party. His orders were that his troops should act upon the defensive, that they should not slaughter a flying or defenceless enemy; and that they never should injure women nor carry off plunder. He even once more offered *Moawiyah* his friendship if he would swear allegiance to him as the true califf. We have already taken notice how lamely authors account for the rights of election to the califat, or where they lay. *Meawiyah* insisted upon it that he owed the califf no obedience, having never recognised his authority, and that *Othman*, who was of the house of *Ommeyah*, had nominated him to the califat, and left him to revenge his death. This nomination appears to have been very likely, and *Moawiyah* laid great stress upon it, because the right of a califf to appoint

point his successor had never been disputed, and had taken place in the case of *Omar*, who had been nominated by the successor of the prophet.

During these conferences, many bloody skirmishes, some of which were real battles, passed between the two armies, but generally to the disadvantage of *Moawiyah*, who is said to have lost in them forty five thousand men. In one of these conflicts, *Ammar*, general of the horse to *Ali*, lost his life. He was amongst the most venerable of all the companions of the prophet, with whom he had served in three battles, and being ninety years of age at the time of his death, both *Moawiyah* and *Amru* bewailed it as if they had been guilty of the highest degree of sacrilegious murder. *Ali* took advantage of an incident which filled his own troops with desire of revenge, and struck those of his enemies with horror. He challenged *Moawiyah* to single combat in order to save the farther effusion of blood, and offered that the survivor should take possession of all. As this challenge was given in the hearing of both armies, *Amru* thought that *Moawiyah* could not with honour decline it. But the latter very wisely refused it on account of the vast superiority of *Ali*, who never had found an equal in strength and feats of arms. *Amru's* reply was, that his cousin's offer was a fair one, and that he could not refuse it without proclaiming himself a coward. Upon this, *Moawiyah* told him, perhaps with great truth, that he wanted him dead that he might himself be califf.

Ali finding he could not bring his antagonist to a single combat, maintained the superiority he had from the goodness of his troops. For putting himself at the head of twelve thousand of his best men, he broke *Moawiyah's* forces so effectually that he put them to a total route, and *Ashtar* would have made himself master of the enemies camp, had it not been for the admirable presence of mind in *Amru*, who advised *Moawiyah* to make some of his best mounted horsemen fix a number of copies of the *Koran* upon the tops of their lances, and to proclaim aloud; "Behold the book that ought to decide all differences between us, this is God's book that is to judge between us and you". As *Moawiyah* had hitherto rejected all terms of accommodation, the most enthusiastic, and therefore the bravest of *Ali's* troops at the sight of the *Koran*, thus critically and solemnly produced, stopped the pursuit just as they were entering the enemies camp, and demanded of *Ali* to refer his cause to the decision of the *Koran*, and to call *Ashtar* off from the pursuit. It seems by this time to have been morning, for we are told that the battle continued all night with prodigious slaughter on both sides. *Ali* had not authority enough to prevail with his troops not to suffer a victory they had so dearly purchased, to slip out of their hands by so silly a stratagem. That which amongst other people would have been deemed ridiculous, *Ali* deprived of the fruits of his victory by a singular stratagem.

ridiculous, amongst the *Arabs* was accounted sacred and on this occasion was successful. The troops of *Irak* on *Ali*'s side threw down their arms, and the *Karejites*, or those who had murdered *Othman* threatened him with the same fate if he did not instantly order *Ashtar* to desist from the pursuit. *Ali* in vain told them that he knew *Moawiyah* and *Amru* too well to believe that they had the smallest regard for the *Koran* or religion; by God continued he, (for the *Arabs* deem swearing a point of their religion) they hang up those *Korans* only to make dupes of us. But all his remonstrances were in vain, and *Ali* seeing them ready to proceed to extremities, was obliged to send an order for *Ashtar* to draw off his troops, which he obeyed with the greatest reluctance.

He is forced to accept of an arbitration between him and *Moawiyah*.

Ali, as he well might, considered himself as no longer the sovereign of troops who forced him to so inglorious a relinquishment of a victory that must have been decisive in his favour. But, in fact, *Moawiyah* had found means to corrupt some of his chief officers, particularly *Asbath* who was the chieftain or prince of the *Irakians*. Upon the cessation taking place, *Asbath* had an interview with *Moawiyah*, who demanded that the difference between him and *Ali* should be referred to two persons, who were to decide according to the real meaning of the *Koran*, and the traditions of the prophet. *Asbath* reporting this proposal to *Ali*, the latter received it with great coldness, intimating that he was no longer master, or even at liberty to speak his sentiments, and that the army must settle the affairs amongst themselves. But matters had been previously settled between *Asbath* and *Moawiyah*, and *Abu Musa* a man of some virtue, but of no penetration or abilities, had been pitched upon to arbitrate for *Ali*, as was *Amru*, the best soldier, statesman and scholar in the East, for *Moawiyah*. These being proposed to *Ali* for arbitrators, he objected to *Abu Musa* not only as a weak man, but as a traitor, who had before deserted him. But the affair was now in the hands of the two armies or rather of their chiefs, who insisted upon *Ali*'s accepting of the referees who had been named. *Ali* named *Abbas* for the referee on his side, but the managers of the negotiation objected to him as not being an indifferent person, because he was cousin german to *Ali*. *Ashtar* was next named, but he too was rejected, and *Ali* was obliged to acquiesce in the nomination of *Abu Musa*.

This great point being gained by *Moawiyah*, the next of importance was to bind *Ali* and his party to the performance of what ever award should be given by the two referees. For this purpose a treaty of peace or rather a truce was proposed till the arbitrators should pronounce their award, and this being agreed to by *Ali*, his name was inserted in the instrument, as being chief and emperor of the faithful. But when the secretary, in reading, pronounced those titles *Moawiyah* objected

objected to them as taking for granted the very thing in dispute. This was far from being an unreasonable objection, and we have known the same made in later times and amongst the politest nations. "I should, said *Moawiyah* be the worst of men in opposing you as I have done, had I acknowledged you for the commander of the faithful". *Ali's* friends were for his insisting upon his preserving his titles, but he waved them, on pretence that, on an occasion we have already mentioned, the prophet of God had done the same for the sake of peace. The instrument was then signed by both parties; but the arbitrators required them at the same time to sign another, by which they were implicitly to submit to their award, which they accordingly did in the face of both armies, who thereby agreed to what had been done and became guarantees of the performance, the arbitrators agreeing to decide it by the next *Ramadan*.

Ali was obliged to submit to what was thus prescribed him and returned to *Cufa*, which he had of late made the seat of his government, as *Moawiyah* did to his at *Damascus*. Both of them, at this time, were considered as divested of all public power, the army of each being commanded by their generals, and the grand functions of religion, in which the real power of the califat consisted, being committed to two *Imans* or high priests, who were to act, as such, during the suspension of the power of each of their principals. The place where the decision was to be pronounced was *Daumat*, a town on the frontiers of *Syria* about five days journey from *Damascus* and fifteen from *Medina*.

When *Ali* returned to *Cufa* he found a general discontent. A new rebellion at what had been done prevail thro' the *Karejites*, who had been the main instruments of forcing him to the shameful compliances he had made. It is not at all impossible but that they themselves had been outwitted by the leaders they trusted, and that when they forced *Ali* into the suspension of arms at the battle of *Seffein*, they imagined the matter was to have been solemnly and publickly debated according to the rules of the *Koran*, and that consequently every soldier of the army was to be an arbitrator. Be that as it will, it is certain that they reproached *Ali* and with great reason, for submitting the decision of his rights to man when they could be judged by God only; and they insisted upon that being their meaning when they obliged him to agree to the cessation of arms, and that the only method left him, if he expected they should continue to serve him, was to renew the war and put all his enemies without mercy to the sword.

Ali heard those remonstrances with indignation, and in his turn reproached the rebels with having forced him into what he had done, but he declared that shameful and injurious as it was, he would not violate the faith he had given, but abide by the decision he had been obliged to submit to.

This answer irritated the rebels so much, that they caballed amongst themselves, and chose for their leader a desperate enthusiast one *Abdallah Ebn Waheb*. Their numbers were soon encreased from all quarters by others who were either disaffected to his government or sought to profit by intestine commotions, and their general rendezvous was at *Naharwan* a town four miles east of the *Tygris* between *Bagdad* and *Waset*, where, in a short time, they assembled to the number of twenty five thousand.

Practices
of *Amru*.

In the mean while the artful *Amru*, under the pretext of settling the terms of their arbitration according to the principles of the *Koran*, had frequent meetings with *Abu Musa* the other referee; but in reality to circumvent him. After laying before him the state of the *Moslem* empire, he took notice of the objections that lay against both claimants, and observed that the public tranquillity never could be restored unless both of them were deposed and the *Moslems* were left at liberty to proceed to a new election. This doctrine he enforced with so many plausible reasons, and with such superiority of genius over that of *Abu Musa*, that he brought him entirely into his sentiment, and both of them proceeded to the place of decision with great pomp, attended by a body of troops. When they came to *Dawmat* they found the armies of the two competitors drawn out in expectation of the event. A tribunal was erected between, and within the hearing of both, from which, sentence was to be pronounced separately by the two arbitrators.

Ali deposed by his craft,

Abu Musa at first desired *Amru* to accept of the precedence in pronouncing the sentence, but as this must have destroyed all the schemes of the latter, *Abu Musa* was by him with many specious reasons persuaded to mount the tribunal first. This done, addressing himself to the audience on both sides, with a loud voice he said, "I degrade *Ali* and *Moawiyah* from the government of the faithful in the same manner as I pull this ring from my finger" which having done he immediately descended from the tribunal.

Amru then mounted it and in like manner addressing himself to the spectators he said, "you have heard how *Abu Musa*'s award has deposed *Ali* from the government, and I concur with the same, but decree the califat to *Moawiyah*, and invest him with the sovereignty in the same manner as I put this ring upon my finger. In so doing I am guided by the rules of justice, *Moawiyah* having been, by *Othman*, declared his successor, and become the avenger of his blood besides, being more than any other *Moslem* worthy of the califat."

but unjust-ly.

Notwithstanding the simplicity of *Abu Musa*, he resented this circumvention very highly, and declared before all the assembly the manner in which *Amru* had deceived him as well as the terms they had agreed on. In fact, the deceit was too gross to impose upon *Ali* or his party, and they declared

clared the whole proceeding void, nay the more sensible amongst them were more attached to him than ever. As to *Abu Musa*, he had inevitably ruined himself with both parties, and therefore fled to *Mecca*, where he was secured by the privilege of the place. According to some writers the two referees had agreed to advance *Abdallah* the son of the califf *Omar* to the califat, but this seems to have been pretended by *Amru* only to blind *Abu Musa*, for the terms of the instrument of the arbitration gave them no such power.

Upon the whole, however, this is one of the most extraordinary decisions we meet with in any history, and the circumstances attending it are well attested. *Moawiyah* gained this advantage, that his antagonist was deposed by both arbitrators and he only by one, his sovereignty being confirmed by the other. As to the merits of the two candidates there was no comparison. *Abbas* declared in public to *Amru* himself, that “*Ali* had no blemish that could degrade him, and *Moawiyah* no virtue that could advance him”, and this in fact seems to have been the general sense of the *Moslems* at this time.

It is therefore natural to enquire why so many of them were prepossessed in favour of *Moawiyah*. Enough remains upon the face of history to account for this. Tho’ *Moawiyah* wore the masque of *Moslemism*, but in his heart despised it, and considered the prophet, as indeed he was, no better than a tyrant and usurper over the civil rights of his country, which by birth as well as interest he had a better right to preceed over than any other *Meccan*, or at least he had, as a good patriot, a title to shake off from her the fetters, which the prophet and his successors had ingrossed. This undoubtedly was the foundation of *Moawiyah*’s opposition to *Ali*, nor indeed could it rest upon any other, considering the latter’s vast merits, his election and consanguinity to the prophet. *Ali* seems to have been sensible of this when he mentioned *Moawiyah*’s disbelief of the *Koran*, nor, indeed, from all that we can collect from *Moawiyah*’s conduct, expressions and sentiments, does it appear that he had the smallest regard for the prophet or his religion. We may therefore venture to pronounce that the dispute between *Ali* and *Moawiyah* to have been founded upon civil principles alone, and that *Moawiyah*’s party was composed of those *Moslems* who did not conceive that the religion of *Mahomet* gave his successors any title to the civil rights and properties of the *Arabs*. Reflection

Ali having returned to *Cufa*, found all his faithful subjects filled with the utmost indignation at the injury that had been done him, and sixty thousand of them immediately took a fresh oath of fealty to him, by which they bound themselves to stand by his person and government to their last breath. On the other hand, *Moawiyah* was congratulated by *Amru* at *Damascus*, as being now the sole califf; and the utmost ran-
cour

cour prevailed on both sides, each cursing and excommunicating the other.

The *Karejites* rebel.

Had not *Moawiyah* been a most consummate politician, he might upon this occasion have found the means of greatly distressing *Ali*, by supporting the rebellion of the *Karejites*, who continued their rendezvous at *Naharwan*. But *Moawiyah* considered them as traitors and enthusiasts who, should they prevail, would be as troublesome to him as they were to *Ali*. It is certain, however, that their party was greatly strengthened by the desertion of many from *Ali's* government and they proceeded even to put to death several Moslems who differed from them. But we are here to observe that their principles, if they have been rightly represented, were more destructive of Mahometanism than of common sense or sound reason. For their capital heresy consisted in their thinking that virtue, learning and a moral conduct, qualified any man, even a slave, to be an Iman or priest, and that an impious Iman might be put to death; and that even a true believer, (that is a Moslem) if he was a wicked person would be damned in the next world.

Their principles

They are defeated.

Hej. 38.

A. D. 658.

Ali resolving to root out so wicked a sect, who were now twenty-five thousand men in arms, advanced against them at the head of an army. At first he offered them terms which they rejected; and then he told his friends that he had thought of an expedient that would make those hypocrites fly from their professions, as quick as an arrow does from a bow. This he effected by erecting a standard between both armies, and proclaiming by sound of trumpet in the hearing of the rebels, that whoever should repair to that standard should be received in his protection, and whoever should depart to *Cufa* should be safe. Of all the twenty-five thousand rebels, it soon appeared that only four thousand acted upon principle, for the rest took hold of *Ali's* terms. Their leader *Abdallah*, however, at the head of those four thousand that still remained under his command attacked the califf's army, which was numerous and well disciplined, with such intrepidity, that every man of them with their leader, was cut in pieces, tho some authors say, that nine escaped.

Ali betrayed by his great men.

Had *Ali* improved the advantage which so compleat a victory gave him, by immediately leading his army against *Moawiyah*, he might have distressed if not reduced his rival. But it seems plain that many who were inviolably attached to *Ali's* person favoured the cause of *Moawiyah*. For when *Ali* proposed to march immediately, while his army was in high spirits, into *Syria*, his great men opposed him, and counselled him to suffer his troops to go for some days, into quarters of refreshment before they entered upon so arduous an expedition. Tho' *Ali* could not consent to this, yet he encamped in the neighbourhood of *Cufa*, now the seat of his empire, and by proclamation gave his soldiers leave of absence

sence

sence, for one day only, before he began his march. This dissipated his troops so much, that, finding himself unable again to form the face of an army, he gave over all thoughts of the expedition, and retired to *Cufa*.

That *Ali* was a compleat hero, a great prince, and, considering he was a *Moslem*, an excellent philosopher, cannot be fairly doubted. But in point of not only treachery, but of policy, *Moawiyah* far exceeded him; though, perhaps, great part of his success was owing to *Amru*. For when *Kais* had, in *Ali*'s name, taken possession of the government of *Egypt*, he found the friends of *Amru*, and consequently of *Moawiyah*, so numerous in that province, that he was obliged to act with great moderation, which gave a handle for *Moawiyah* to publish every where that *Kais* was secretly in his interest; and he even went so far as to forge letters from *Kais* to himself, to that effect, and produced them. The news of this rendered *Kais* suspected to *Ali*, and he gave the government of *Egypt* to *Mahomet*, the son of *Abubeker*, the same who had murdered *Othman*. He could not have made a more unfortunate choice, both because it strengthened the suspicion of his being accessory to *Othman*'s death, and because *Mahomet* was so exasperated against the friends of *Othman*, that, upon his arrival in his government, he proceeded against them with such severity, that the whole province was thrown into confusion, and filled with disputations. This obliged *Ali* to nominate *Malec* to the government of *Egypt*; but *Malec*, before he arrived in *Egypt*, was, by means of *Moawiyah*, poisoned, with some honey, given him by a landlord where he lodged; the news of which made *Moawiyah* break out into this exclamation, "Verily the almighty has hosts of honey!" But he lost no time in making the best advantage of *Malec*'s death, and *Mahomet*'s unpopularity in *Egypt*, where he still remained. For *Amru* immediately set out at the head of six hundred horse, and, by forced marches, he joined, in a very few days, a body of troops that had taken the field in the neighbourhood of *Alexandria*, under *Sharig*, the chief of *Othman*'s party in *Egypt*. He was likewise joined by the baun *Hareth*, whom *Mahomet* had expelled, for their relationship to his proposed successor, *Malec*. In short, *Amru* soon made himself master of *Alexandria*, and routed the army under *Mahomet*, who was himself taken prisoner, and being put to death, his body was inclosed within the skin of an ass, and reduced to ashes. His death was most bitterly bewailed by his sister *Ayesha*, who, on that occasion, solemnly cursed both *Moawiyah* and *Amru*, who now succeeded to the government of *Egypt*.

After this great event, the affairs of *Ali* declined, though he still continued to be well served by some of his officers and troops. For *Dakak*, one of *Moawiyah*'s generals, having penetrated into *Irack* where he committed great cruelties

Moawiyah's generals surprised *Medina*, and *Mecca*.

Remissness of *Ali's* government.

Thirty thousand *Arabs* slaughtered.

Ali's uncle abandons him.

Conspiracy formed against

Ali, *Moawiyah*, and *Amru*.

ties and devastations upon the *Arabs*, at the head of three thousand men, was defeated by *Hajar*, one of *Ali's* generals. About the same time, *Moawiyah*, taking advantage of the absence of *Abdallah*, *Ali's* governor of *Basra*, who was then assisting the califf, with his advice, at *Cufa*, surprised that important city, but the place was retaken by *Ziyad*, *Abdallah's* deputy, and *Moawiyah's* general was killed in battle. *Ziyad*, after this, was appointed to be *Ali's* governor of *Persia*, where he behaved with such prudence and moderation, that the *Persians* themselves declared, they had not been so well governed since the days of their king *Anusperwan*, the just, in whose reign *Mahomet*, the impostor, was born. But the interest of *Ali*, this year, received a fatal blow from *Moawiyah*, whose general, *Bashar*, surprised *Mecca* and *Medina*, and threw down the walls of the latter, after obliging the inhabitants of both to take an oath of allegiance to *Moawiyah*.

Two such important conquests, without bloodshed, confirm what we have before observed, with regard to *Moawiyah's* opposition to *Ali*, for it is admitted by historians, that he had secret friends, with whom he corresponded, in both places. *Ali* seems to have been too remiss upon this occasion, for his governors of both places being unprovided with the means of making a defence, fled to him at *Cufa*. Those conquests opened a passage for *Bajar*, into the province of *Yaman*; where *Abdallah*, the *Ansar*, governed for *Ali*; but, being unprovided with troops, fled to *Cufa*. Two young sons of his however, fell into *Bajar's* hands, and by him were cruelly murdered. *Bajar* then penetrated farther into the province, which he filled with blood and devastation, and put to death at *Al Tayef*, *Yamama*, and at *Medina*, no fewer than thirty thousand *Arabs*.

The veneration of the *Moslem* writers for the memory of *Ali*, has undoubtedly induced them to throw a veil over many particulars of his government, which must have been, in several respects, very exceptionable. We know of little or no opposition he made to this rapid progress of *Moawiyah's* arms, till it was too late; and then he ordered *Jariyah* to march against *Bajar*, with three thousand horse; but he could not overtake him. In short, the heresy, as it is called, of the *Kajerites*, and the horrible slaughter made of the bravest amongst them, at the battle of *Naharwan*, seem to have affected the minds of the *Arabs* to the prejudice of *Ali's* government. We find, that even his uncle, *Okail*, about this time submitted to *Moawiyah*, who gratified him with considerable employments.

The *Moslem* empire became now a scene of plunder, devastation, and murder. *Moawiyah*, however, found, that the veneration of the public for *Ali's* person, was such, that he durst not attack it, and *Ali*, notwithstanding all his late losses, was still as powerful in the empire as *Moawiyah*. In short, the unhappy *Arabs* perceived their country was become

become the theatre of a bloody war, which promised to be of long continuance. The *Kajerites* had a hearty aversion for both parties, and three of their most determined enthusiasts meeting together at *Mecca*, heated one another so by their discourses, that they came to a resolution to dispatch *Ali*, *Moawiyah*, and *Amru*, as being the only means of restoring peace to their country. Each pitched upon the man he was to assassinate. Their names were *Abdaraman*, *Barack*, *Amru*, and *Eben Beker*. *Barack* undertook *Moawiyah*; *Eben Beker*, *Amru*, and *Abdaraman*, *Ali*. They then resolved that each shou'd kill his man on the same day, which was fixed to be *Friday* the seventeenth of the *Ramadan*, a day set apart for the most solemn exercises of religion amongst the *Moslems*. They then poisoned their swords, and each took a separate rout; *Barack* to *Damascus*; *Eben Beker* to *Egypt*; and *Abdaraman* to *Cufa*.

Barack attacked *Moawiyah*, and wounded him in the *Moawiyah* reins, but the wound was, by the physician, pronounced wounded, to be curable, if *Moawiyah* would suffer himself to be cauterised, or drink a potion which would deprive him of his generative faculties. *Moawiyah*, having already children, submitted to the latter, which, we are told, had the effect predicted by the physician. Though this story has somewhat of a romantic air, yet we dare not absolutely reject it. The *Arabs* are well known to have been, long before this time, eminent in the arts of medicine, and some of the greatest discoveries in it are universally allowed to have been made by them. As to the fitness of the alternative, it belongs to a medical discussion. The assassin was seized, and having had his hands and feet cut off, he was suffered to live; but presuming afterwards to marry one of *Moawiyah*'s friends, without orders, he put an end to his life, lest he should enjoy that pleasure, of which he had been the means of depriving another.

Amru, upon the day of assassination, happened to be *Amru* seized with a fit of the cholic, and was forced to appoint escapes. *Karaja*, the captain of the guards, to perform the religious service, in his stead. The deputy received from the hand of the assassin the death that was designed for the principal. *Ebu Beker* being seized, and carried before *Amru*, asked, who he was? and being told, "the governor," "Who then, said he, with marks of surprise, have I killed? Upon this *Amru* called out, "You meant *Amru*, but God meant *Karaja*;" and immediately ordered him for execution. Some put the last saying in the mouth of the assassin.

Abdaraman seems to have been a murderer of a more sedate and cool temper, than either of his two companions possessed. *Cufa* was the native country, as we may call it, of the *Kajerites*, and the assassin took up his lodging with a female enthusiast, of that sect, who highly resented the deaths of some of her relations, who had fallen in the battle of *Naharwan*. Her sentiments were so agreeable to those

those of *Abdaraman*, that he promised to marry her; but she told him, with all the fierceness of an *Arabian* enthusiast, "that she was resolved to marry no man who could not give her a dower, consisting of three thousand dirhems, a slave, a maid, and the head of *Ali*. The bargain was soon struck, and the female, to carry it more securely into execution, associated with *Abdaraman*, two other enthusiasts in the same cause, *Wordan* and *Shabib*.

Ali murdered.

Ali, every thing considered, must at this time have been very uneasy, and apprehensive of death, from the hands of some of those enthusiasts. He fancied his end was approaching, and was heard to say, to particular friends, exhorting him to patience, at seeing the inquietudes he suffered, "Alas! my heart; patience is needless, and death is certain." When, on the day of his assassination, he was preparing to go to the mosque, one of his slaves threw a cudgel amongst some poultry that were making a noise in his yard; he construed their cries as lamentations for his approaching death. Those incidents, which become omens, when any thing fatal happens immediately after, would otherwise be unobserved. He proceeded to the mosque, where the three assassins, in expectation of his coming, were already planted. Upon his entering the door, they pretended to quarrel amongst themselves, and drew their swords. *Werdan*, all of a sudden, aimed a blow at the califf, which fell upon the gate; but *Abdaraman* struck him just on the part of the head where he had formerly received a wound, and the stroke proved mortal to *Ali*. As soon as the assassin gave the stroke, he called out, "By the lord of the Caaba I have killed him," and endeavoured to make his escape, as did both his companions. *Werdan* was pursued and killed on the spot, but *Shabib* escaped; and *Abdaraman* was taken, lurking in a corner, with the murderous weapon in his hand.

His orders, on his death-bed.

Ali, in death, lost none of that magnanimity for which he was so conspicuous in life. He ordered his son *Hasan* to confine the assassin, and to supply him with the means of living; but to put him to death, by one stroke, should he die; "and that," continued he, "immediately, that I may the sooner have an opportunity of impeaching him before the throne of God." The sword that gave him the wound being poisoned, his physicians pronounced him to be past hopes of recovery, and he expired. As to his murderer, according to the best-informed authors, *Ali*'s friends were not very scrupulous in observing his commands, in putting the assassin to death; for, though, perhaps he received his death by one blow, his hands and feet were cut off, and his eyes burnt out; and his body was reduced to ashes. By the best accounts, *Ali*, at the time of his death, was sixty-three years of age, and he was buried in, or near, *Cusa*. His person, though below that of the middle
size,

size, is said to have born so great a resemblance to that of Account, the prophet, that the moslem traditions tell us, the angel and *Gabriel*, at one time, mistook the one for the other; but we rather, of can scarcely think this mistake could have happened in the *Ali*, and prophet's life-time, as he was about twenty-five years his go-older than his nephew. *Ali*'s face was florid, and a smile, vernment. which was generally upon it, denoted the sweetness of his temper, and the fertility of his mind. His head was bald, his beard bushy, and his belly prominent; but, upon the whole, he is said to have been a most agreeable figure.

Ali, had nine wives, and as the knowledge of the names of his descendants is material to the subsequent part of the history of the *Arabs*, it is proper to give some account of them here.

His first wife was *Fatima*, the daughter of *Mahomet*; and by her he had his son *Hasan*, and another, who died young. By his second wife, *Oruma*, he had four sons, who were all of them killed at the battle of *Kerbella*. By *Asima*, his third wife, he had two sons, *Johya* and *Aour*. *Omar* was the son of his fourth wife, *Omm-Habiba*. His sixth wife was *Caulah*, and she was the mother of *Mohammed*. As to his other three wives, we know not their names, but he left by them three more sons, the names of two were, *Mahomet* His chil- the younger, and *Amru*; the name of the third has not come dren. to our hands. The daughters are said to have been eigh- teen.

The death of *Ali* is the most remarkable period of all the *Arab* history, and it is therefore necessary to be a little explicite as to his character, and the sects which his name and authority gave rise to, and the rather, as they subsist to this day.

The reader, in the above history of *Ali*'s reign, has seen Reasons many sketches that may give him an idea of *Ali*'s charac- why he ter, as a sovereign; but his fondness, as a father, seems to was unfor- have been the rock upon which the vessel of his government tunate. split. Many *Arabs*, at the time of his death, were alive, who remembered the manner in which *Mahomet* made himself sovereign of the *Arabs*. *Ali* imagined that this honour should have descended to himself and his family, especially as his sons were the grandsons and darlings of the prophet, but the *Arabs* in general were of another opinion, which appears to have been the only reason why he was thrice set aside from the succession. *Abubeker* and *Omar* thought as the bulk of their countrymen did; and were too wise to nominate their sons to a succession that must have proved fatal to them; and it was the jealousy which the leading *Arabs* had, that *Ali* wanted to confine that succession to his family, that occasioned all his troubles, and the heresy and rebellion of the *Kajerites*, occasioned by the indelible character of holiness which he wanted to affix to the office of Iman, and which, he pretend- ed,

Constitu-
tion of
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and *Per-*
sia.

Preserva-
tion of
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Ali's max-
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ed, descended upon his family. The *Kajerites* knew the danger of this doctrine, and opposed it. It was their defection in *Arabia* that gave *Moawiyah* such signal successes there; and afterwards proved the ruin of the family of *Ali*. *Moawiyah's* mild government in *Syria* had long endeared that province to him. The *Syrians*, having been long refused to be governed by princes of their own, were indifferent as to the persons of their governors, and submitted the most willingly to those who ruled them the most gently. The *Arabs*, before the time of *Mahomet* the impostor, formed amongst themselves a kind of a commonwealth, composed of a great number of septs, or tribes, each ruled by a head, with a kind of patriarchal sway. We may, therefore, upon the whole, look upon them as having been a free people; which undoubtedly was the reason why they opposed being subject to the hereditary dominion of a *Meccan* family. If they submitted to *Mahomet* himself, it was by force, and his two successors had not pretended to hereditary right. But the *Persians*, who had always been slaves to a race of kings, adhered to the house of *Ali*, whose followers were called the *Sigites*, and to this day they bear a mortal antipathy to the *Turks*, and those who recognise the first three successors of the prophet.

But a consideration of great importance presents itself upon this occasion; which is, that the doctrine and religion of *Mohomet* must, soon after *Ali's* death, have been entirely extinguished, had it not been for those religious disputes. Ambition found its interest in keeping them alive, nor would it have been possible for *Moawiyah* and *Ahnu*, who, in fact, were Deists, if not Atheists, if any such there are, to have succeeded by any other means. But, to return now to the character of *Ali* :

He had vast advantages by the long experience he had of the people over whom he reigned. His magnanimity, his courage, and conduct in war, were as much above all competition, as was the sanctity of his life and character. But that which gives the character of *Ali* a superiority to that of even the prophet himself, is, that, in him, enthusiasm was softened into philosophy, nor had he the least of an *Arab* about him, but the lively imagination, and the sublime expression, peculiar to that people. Mr. *Ockly*, at the end of his history of the *Saracens*, has printed a collection of what he calls his sentences. They are, for the most part, divine and moral maxims, and under all the disadvantages of translation, are excelled by few human productions of that kind. The antiquity of *Greece* and *Rome* can produce nothing equal to them for variety, quickness, justness, and elevation of sentiment. Though it is unjust to particularize any, where all are equally excellent, yet, to gratify the curiosity of our readers, the following may give them a specimen of the Ethic kind amongst them. “ The tongue
of

The tongue of a wise man lieth behind his heart; the heart of a fool lieth behind his tongue.—The complaisance of a fool is like a garden on a dunghill.—The man who is given to jesting, will never fail either of hatred or contempt.—Despair is a free man; Hope is a slave.—The opinion of a wise man is divination.—The freedom of a man consists in speaking the truth.—A learned conversation is the garden of paradise.—The light of thy heart is in prayer, in the darkness of the night.—Knowledge is the ornament of the rich, and the riches of the poor.—Clemency in power is a defence against the vengeance of God.—Truth is the conformity of speech, to the end for which God ordained it.—Restraining *self* from appetite is the greatest Holy-war.”

Many of *Ali*'s other maxims breathe a spirit of true and unaffected piety, without the smallest tincture of enthusiasm, and are such as might grace the purest Christian page. Those sentiments were not only the transcript of *Ali*'s mind, but of his practice. By nature gentle, affable and humane, he lived long enough to see, and bewail, the effects of enthusiasm, which his own safety obliged him to punish with exemplary severity. In short, it can scarcely be conceived, that a person of *Ali*'s excellent good sense, and philosophic turn, could carry his prejudices and enthusiasm with him to the grave. We find, in his practice and sentiments, nothing that resembled those of his father-in-law, the impostor; and we have seen, in our own times, many, who, in their more advanced years, by the force of reason, surmounted the religious delusions of their youth. The Shi-ites have done justice to this father of their sect. They have given him the title of “the Lyon of God.” “The foundation of light and graces,” and, “the king of men.” They disown the authority of the *Sonna*, or collection of traditions, concerning the prophet, which their antagonists hold in equal veneration with the *Koran* itself, and which is stuffed with gross absurdities. They admit, in their faith, many points of Pythagorism; particularly the transmigration of souls, and apply to *Ali* several of the epithets that the inspired writers of the New Testament have given to Jesus Christ, for whom *Ali* himself is said to have had a particular veneration. Before we quit this part of our work, we cannot but give the reader one other specimen of the quickness of his wit, out of many that may be produced. One of his general officers, one day, had the assurance to ask him the reason, why the reigns of *Abubeker* and *Omar* were so tranquil at home; and those of *Othman* and himself so unquiet and boisterous? “Because,” replied *Ali*, “*Abubeker* and *Omar* had *Othman* and myself for their servants; but *Othman* and I found none but you, and such as you, to serve us.” *Ali* reigned about two months short of five years.

The reign of Hasan, Ali's eldest son.

Hej. 40.
A.D. 660.

*Hasan suc-
ceeds.*

WE are told, that *Ali*, on his death-bed, refused to name a successor, in imitation of the prophet, but he recommended it to his friends to chuse one, under whom they might all unite, and their choice, accordingly, fell upon his eldest son, *Hasan*; who inherited more of his father's piety and virtue, than he did of his abilities or courage. In the funeral oration he pronounced before the people of *Cufa*, he had the following remarkable expressions, "You have," said he, "murdered a man, on the night in which the Koran came from heaven, and Jesus, upon whom be peace, ascended to it, and in which *Joshua*, the son of *Nun*, was killed. By God he was excelled, by none who reigned before him, and will be equalled by none who shall succeed him." The assembly then proceeded to the ceremony of his inauguration, at which he stretched out his arm, in token that he would be faithful to the Koran, and the apostolical traditions (by which it would appear, that the Shiites had not yet disowned the authority of the Sonna) and make war against all their opposers. His great men then approached to pay him their fealty, and he insisted upon their obedience to him, upon their being at peace with his friends, and at war with his enemies. But this last expression was greatly disliked by the *Irakian* troops, who were present, as it seemed to intimate the prolongation of the *Syrian* war, which had so much harraled them.

The
troops dis-
posed to
mutiny.

Hasan soon observed this spirit of discontent, and dreaded it. At the time of *Ali's* death, there was a short cessation of arms between him and *Moawiyah*, and *Hasan* was greatly bent upon renewing it. But his friends, who were very zealous for his aggrandizement, perhaps, with a view to their own, represented, that he was at the head of sixty thousand better troops than *Moawiyah* could raise, who had sworn to stand by his father, to the last, and who never would abandon him. *Hasan* was over-persuaded to order his troops to march against *Moawiyah*, but by the time he had reached *Madayan*, both califfs found reason to be struck with the same sentiments.

*Moawiyah's pro-
posal.*

Moawiyah knew the failings of *Hasan*, but he knew, at the same time, that he had under him a fine army, commanded by excellent generals. Having, however, great dependence upon the pacific disposition of *Hasan*, he sent him his name subscribed to a Carte Blanche, intimating, *Hasan* might have any terms, but empire.

On

On the other hand, before this proposal could reach *Hasan* in-
san, he saw that the mutinous disposition of his troops, the sulted by
Irakians especially, on whom he had his greatest depen- his troops,
 dence, encreased so fast, that he privately sent to *Moawiyah*
 a paper, containing the terms upon which he was willing
 to surrender to him the government. This disposition
 went so far, that when *Hasan* reached *Madayan*, he was
 dismounted from his seat, and wounded, which obliged him
 to take refuge in the castle of *Madayan*: Here the gover-
 nor's nephew was very earnest with his uncle, to give him
 up in irons to *Moawiyah*, but the governor, after bidding
 the curse of God be upon him for his advice, said, "What,
 would you betray the son of the daughter of the apostle of
 God."

In the mean while, *Moawiyah* had likewise put his troops Skirmish
 in motion ; and giving *Basbar* the command of the first di- between
 vision of his army, he ordered him to take possession of the armies
Masken. But before that could be done, an encounter hap-
 pened between him and *Kais*, who commanded an advan-
 ced party of twelve thousand men, under *Hasan* ; but nei-
 ther side boasted of the victory.

By this time *Hassein*, brother to *Hasan*, had discovered the
 califf's resolution to resign the government, and did all he
 could to dissuade him from putting it into execution, as
 being in itself a mean-spirited action, and reflecting the
 highest dishonour upon the memory of their father. *Hasan*
 was fixed in his resolution, and every day's experience of
 the spirit of his troops, seemed to confirm it. But, having
 by this time received the Carte Blanche of *Moawiyah*, he
 doubled above the name of the latter, the conditions he had
 already sent him. *Moawiyah* stickled at this, and produced
 to *Hasan*'s agent, or himself, the terms he had spontane-
 ously proposed and subscribed. The point, it is true, was
 a little doubtful, but *Moawiyah* was resolved, at any rate, to
 buy out his rival, and, at last, the terms were settled. The
 chief of them were ; That all the money in the treasury
 of *Cusa* should be given up to *Hasan*. That *Moawiyah*
 should assign him the revenues of a very fine district in
Persia amounting, according to Mr. *Ockley*, to one hun-
 dred and fifty thousand pounds, sterling, a year ; and that
Moawiyah should never reflect upon the memory of *Ali*,
 in the presence of *Hasan*. The first draught presented by
Hasan imported, that he never should reflect upon it all.
 But that never could have answered *Moawiyah*'s purpose,
 and he rejected it. A general act of pardon and amnesty, *Hasan* re-
 past in favour of the adherents of *Ali* and *Hasan*. Such were signs the
 the terms upon which *Hasan* resigned the government, and govern-
 retired to a private life. This treaty, probably, was con- ment to
 cluded at *Masbern*, from whence *Moawiyah* and *Hasan* went *Moawi-*
 to *Cusa*, which they entered together in triumph and seem- *yah*.
 ing friendship.

His speech
to the
Cufans.

Amru was all this time with *Moawiyah*, and they were useful to one another; for there had been no real friendship between them, ever since the latter had declined *Ali's* challenge. *Amru* insisted upon *Moawiyah's* obliging *Hasan* to declare, from his own mouth, the reality of his abdication. *Moawiyah* thought that this might be attended with bad effects to his cause, but complied; and *Hasan*, instead of acknowledging his resignation to be voluntary, in a set speech, upbraided the *Cufians* with inconstancy and perfidy, and *Moawiyah* with having employed force in obliging him to resign; which he said he had done only to prevent the effusion of *Moslem* blood, and concluded with a hint, as if his, *Hasan's*, family, might yet find the means of asserting their right. This speech made so visible an impression, to *Moawiyah's* prejudice, upon many who were present, that it increased the disgust between *Amru* and *Moawiyah*, who thought the other had given the advice only to injure him with the *Cufians*. These last, however, refused to give up the money in their treasury, which amounted to a vast sum, to *Hasan*; and he upbraided them in public, not only with robbing him of his property, but with the death of his father, and with having forced himself, by their base usage of him, to resign the government. *Moawiyah* was too penetrating not to be sensible what effects the unmerited distress of a great man, and the first lineal representative of the prophet, had upon the people; and to indemnify both parties, he made up the money *Hasan* ought to have received from the treasury, by making a large addition to his appointments, upon which both *Hasan* and *Hassein* retired to *Medina*.

Hasan's exchange of tumultuous and precarious greatness, for all that can be not only comfortable but splendid, in a private life, would have been wise, had he reflected upon the suspicious nature of ambition. *Moawiyah* never could be easy while he was alive; though he employed his time chiefly in acts of beneficence and charity, to which even his vast income was disproportioned. *Hasan's* own wife was employed to poison him, which she effected by the instigation of *Yezid*, *Moawiyah's* son, who promised to marry her. But, when *Hasan* was dispatched, *Moawiyah* obliged her to accept of a sum of money. *Hasan* was poisoned, about eight years after his abdication, in the seventy-seventh year of his age, and reigned about five months. His virtues suited a cowl, but not a diadem, and therefore we shall not follow the *Moslem* authors in the prolix accounts they have left us of his liberality and charity.

Moawiyah

Moawiyah, the first califf of the house of Ommyah.

TH A T *Moawiyah* thought his power very precarious, during the life of *Hasan*, appeared plainly from what happened immediately after the death of the latter. For the whole house of *Ommyah* opposed his being buried, as he had desired, near *Mahomet*, his grandfather, and prevailed with *Ayesha*, in whose house *Mahomet*'s tomb was, to refuse his body that honour ; and, therefore, it was buried in the common burying-ground, or elsewhere ; but authors are not agreed as to the place. It is certain, however, that this affair encreased the animosities between the houses of *Ali* and *Ommyah*. This incident, trifling as it may seem, is of importance to prove, that, though *Moawiyah*'s party payed the highest veneration to the prophet, they did not conceive that his descendants were entitled to inherit any part of his dignity or power.

We have already observed, that the *Karejites* were equally the enemies of all who either pretended to, or possessed, the government, and every day added to their strength ; so that *Moawiyah*, soon after his accession to the undivided califat, found himself endangered by their rebellion. Tho' *Hasan* and his party hated them equally as *Moawiyah* did, yet they secretly wished them success ; and *Moawiyah* applied to *Hasan*, after his retirement to *Medina*, to take the command of an army against them. This, no doubt, was done with an intention to unite *Hasan*'s party against the *Karejites*, but *Hasan* declined the honour, on pretence that he had now retired to a private life, and, added he, " had I even possessed any knowledge of military affairs, I should have employed it against yourself." *Moawiyah* was then obliged to send an army of his Syrian troops against the rebels, but the latter proving victorious, *Moawiyah* was forced to apply to the *Cusians*, who were veteran Arab troops, or their descendants, and prevail with them to march against the *Karejites*, which they did, and extinguished the rebellion. *Moawiyah*'s next care was to appoint proper governors of the provinces under him ; he constituted *Mogheirah*, governor of *Gufa* ; *Abdallah* of *Basra*, and *Korasan* ; *Merwan* of *Medina* ; and *Abdallah*, the son of *Hazem*, of *Damascus* ; *Amru*, to whom he was principally indebted for his elevation, was continued in his government of *Egypt*, and his excellent choice of governors, that contributed equally as power and riches did to the aggrandisement of *Moawiyah*'s government. But a person of the utmost importance was yet to be secured in his interest, and the manner of doing it was a delicate point.

History of
Ziyad.

This was *Ziyad*, *Ali*'s governor of *Persia*; he was bastard brother to *Moawiyah* himself; but *Abu Sophian*, the father of both, was afraid to own him, because of *Omar*'s severity in such cases. It happened, that the mother of *Ziyad* was married to a *Greek* slave, when he was begot, which hindered her from being stoned to death for her fornication; the maxim of the *Moslem* law being, "the child to the blankets, and the whore to the stone." By the same law, *Ziyad* was to be considered as being the real son of the *Greek*; but *Abu Sophian* had his reasons for believing him to be his, having, before the prohibition of drinking wine took place, lodged in the house, and been familiar with the *Greek*'s wife, who seems to have connived at the intrigue. Be this as it will, *Ziyad* was second to none in that age, for eloquence, virtue, courage, and conduct. Though he was at this time only about forty-two years of age, he was the most respectable person in all the califf's dominions; but not thinking his allegiance to *Ali* to be dissolved by the misfortunes of that family, he had hitherto, refused to recognize *Moawiyah*'s government. It happened, when he was but a young man, in *Omar*'s time, that he was made a judge, or *Kadi*. Such judges amongst the *Arabs*, in those days, acted as the censors of old *Rome*, and no subject was so great as to be exempted from punishment by their sentence. *Mogheirah* was brought before *Ziyad*, upon a charge of incontinency, but *Ziyad*, finding it to be either false or frivolous, acquitted *Mogheirah*, and ordered the prosecutors to be severely scourged. This had begot a vast intimacy between him and *Mogheirah*, to whom the califf applied upon this occasion, telling him, "that he could enjoy no tranquillity within himself, or satisfaction in his government, until he could make sure of *Ziyad*'s friendship. *Mogheirah* readily undertook the negotiation between them, and set out for *Eflaka*, the place of *Ziyad*'s residence in *Persia*, and which he had strongly fortified; together with an affectionate letter from the califf.

His character.

Notwithstanding all the virtue of *Ziyad*, there is some room for thinking, that there was a little tincture of honest indignation, in his loyalty to *Ali*; since, by the voluntary abdication of *Hasan*, the most scrupulous conscience could have no difficulty in recognizing *Moawiyah*'s title. *Mogheirah* made every thing easy, and, undoubtedly one of the terms insisted upon by *Ziyad*, was, that he should be recognized by the califf as his brother on the father's side. Both of them returned to *Cufa*, and a solemn process of *Moawiyah*'s recognizing him as a brother, was publickly entered upon. Fortunately for *Ziyad*, the old *Greek* slave who had been his mother's husband, was still alive; and was brought to give his evidence in court, which he did so little to his own or his wife's honour, that he was checked by *Ziyad*, as dipping too much into scandal. Upon the whole, however,

ever, the evidence was so satisfactory to *Moawiyah*, and the judges, that *Ziyad* was formally acknowledged to be the califf's brother by the father, an honour which his countrymen thought to be higher than if he had been recognized as the son of the *Greek* emperor.

Whatever foundation there might in fact be for this transaction, it has an odd aspect in history. The house of *Omayyah* railed against the califf's conduct, and all true *Moslems* were startled at it; as being the first judicial violation of their prophet's law that ever had happened. It was now remembered, that *Ziyad*, when a young man, and beginning to make a great figure in life, had never been owned by *Abu Sophian*, as his son; for *Amru* was heard publicly to declare, that *Ziyad* was a youth of such accomplishments and eloquence, that had his father been a *Koreish*, he could have driven all the *Arabs* before him with his walking-stick. But *Moawiyah* knew the value of the man whom he had thus made his friend, too well, to mind any censure on that account.

His acquisition was the more valuable, because he lost, at this time, the only man in his empire, whose abilities could stand in competition of *Ziyad*; I mean the famous *Amru*, the conqueror and governor of *Egypt*. *Amru* was, in all respects, a genius, and though it is more than probable he did not believe a single tittle of the *Koran*, he had his reasons for affecting a more than ordinary attachment to it. For, before the propagation of *Mahomet's* faith, that is, before the success of his arms took place, he was noted for being the author of several very sarcastical pieces of poetry, against the prophet, which, upon finding his conveniency in turning Mahometan, he had retracted; and had often professed his sorrow for being the author of them; and he was, ever after his conversion, considered as one of the most zealous *Moslems*. An apostate seldom thinks he can over do in zeal; and it probably was that pernicious principle that induced *Amru*, who was a fine scholar, as well as a great general and politician, to destroy the never-enough to be lamented, library of *Alexandria*, at the command of the ever-barbarous, but suspicious, califf. It seems pretty plain from several incidents, that *Moawiyah* was jealous, both of *Amru's* abilities and power; for during all the disputes between him and *Ali*, and even after the resignation of *Hasan*, he governed *Egypt* with a kind of an independent power, not being accountable, for any of its revenues to the califf, and being only obliged to pay the troops he commanded. He was succeeded in his government of *Egypt*, by *Moawiyah's* legitimate brother, *Atba*, who enjoyed his new dignity but a year.

It appears that, notwithstanding the resignation of *Hasan*, and the moderation of *Moawiyah*, his empire, at this time, was filled with rapine and confusion; the common effects of the confusion of the califf.

of a disputed, or unsettled government. *Basra*, in particular, was noted for the many robberies and murders committed in its city, and territories, which the califf imputed chiefly to the softness and indolence of *Abdallah*, the governor. He therefore removed him, and put *Hareth* in his stead. But he too proving unsuccessful, in reforming the abuses of the place, *Moawiyah* committed the service to *Ziyad*. This great man, whose chief failing seems to have been a tincture of severity in his nature, repaired instantly to *Basra*, where, after examining into the state of their police, he found, that the chief robberies and murders complained of, were committed in the night time. He called the people together, and, with that masterly eloquence, in which he is said to have been exceeded by *Ali* alone, which he possessed he declared his firm resolution to reform the disorders of the public. His speech is said to have made a deep impression on the hearers; but, the murders continuing, he forbade all persons, of all ranks, to appear abroad after the hour of evening prayers, upon pain of death. To enforce this severe, but necessary, order, he appointed a patrol to move through the streets, and to put to death all they met. On the first night they killed two hundred persons; and the second only five, and on the third none. This severity had so good an effect, that *Ziyad* issued an order, for all the citizens to leave their shops open during the night, which they did; without any inconveniency, excepting some cattle that once broke into a shop. The representation of this induced *Ziyad* to allow them to place a kind of Cheveux de frize, or hurdle, before their shop doors, to prevent the like accidents; a custom which, we are told, prevails in *Basra*, and other cities of the East, to this day.

Conduct
of *Ziyad*.

His pre-
ferments.

Nothing but the intire reliance which *Moawiyah* had in the virtues of his illegitimate brother, could have induced him to aggrandize *Ziyad* as he did; for he, soon after the great reformation he had made at *Basra*, appointed him governor of *Korasan*, *Sejestan*, *India*, *Barein*, and *Amman*. The reformation and good order which appeared in all those places, after *Ziyad* entered upon his government of them, justified the califf's choice. But *Ziyad* knew that nothing but severity was fit for the times. He therefore was obliged, when he left *Basra*, to commit the government to one *Samra*, who, during his lieutenancy, put no fewer than eight thousand *Basrans* to death; for which he was reproached by *Ziyad*, who still continued in high reputation, both at court, and in all the provinces. His doctrine to *Moawiyah*, however, was, to suffer no dispute of his title to the sovereignty, to subsist within his dominions. The execution of this maxim embroiled him with many of *Ali*'s followers.

Moawiyah, about this time, was in the great scheme, of fixing the succession of the califat, upon his own family. But his eldest son *Yedzed*, whom he was passionately fond of, was an idle, dissolute young man, addicted to gaming, drinking, and every other kind of intemperance. It was now about the forty-fourth year of the *Hejra*, and the old companions of *Mahomet* were every day dropping off thro' age, which *Moawiyah* could not fail to think, was a circumstance greatly in favour of his scheme. Notwithstanding this, every time he sounded the people on that head, they seemed to dislike it so much, that he durst not propose it in plain terms. About this time *Mogheirah* a companion, and one of the principal Moslems, worn out with age and infirmities, resigned his government of *Cufa*, which *Moawiyah* intended to bestow upon *Saed*. *Mogheirah* had some reasons for being dissatisfied with this, and would have retracted what he had done, but he could not, he therefore applied to *Yedzed*, and desired him to solicit his father to nominate him his heir to the califat. *Yedzed* made the proposal to *Moawiyah*, who demanded who it was that had put him upon it. Upon his telling him, that *Mogheirah* had, he restored him to his government. and he sent to sound *Ziyad* as to the affair. But that great Moslem knew the ill qualities of *Yedzed* and dissuaded his father from making any such attempt at this time; and his opinion proving decisive, no attempt was made of that kind during his life.

Mogheirah, however, soon after dying, *Ziyad*, who seems to have had a large share of ambition, succeeded him. This gave him a fresh opportunity of displaying his great talents for government. When he first went to *Cufa*, he assembled the people, and told them, that at first he intended to have brought along with him a guard of some thousands of men, but that reflecting upon the great loyalty, and virtues of the *Cusians*, he had trusted himself in their hands, with no more than his domesticks, whom they saw at the door. The *Cusians* at that time looked upon themselves, as the flower of the Moslem troops, and were proud of the services they had done to *Moawiyah*, in suppressing the rebellion of the *Karejites*. They had heard of *Ziyad's* severity, and some of the assembly threw dust at him, a peculiar mark of disrespect among the *Arabs*. Upon this *Ziyad* descended from the pulpit where he was speaking, and making a private signal for his domesticks to secure the doors, he gave orders for every man to secure his neighbour. The voice of authority is great upon such occasions, and *Ziyad* was obeyed. He then took his seat near the door, and bringing the prisoners before him four by four, he tendered an oath to them separately, by which they were to purge themselves from the outrage they had been guilty of. All took the oath, but about eighty, some writers say only thirty, who all of them lost one of their hands, by *Ziyad's* order.

Disturbances at
Cufa.

This

Ziyad's
severity.

This severity was perhaps necessary for striking the people with that awe, that is necessary for government. But the following instance as it is come to our hands, is perhaps not so defensible, nor indeed accountable for in point of common sense, but by supposing the unfortunate person that suffered, had made a practice of making seditious harangues to the people. For we are told, that *Ziyad* immediately upon his entering upon the government of *Cufa*, enquired who was the most religious man in the city; being answered one *Abul Mogheirah*, he sent for the holy man, and offered him money, if he would refrain going to the mosque, and confine himself to his own house. *Abul* absolutely rejected the conditions, because he said it was his duty to say his prayers in the mosque, on communication day, and that he would not omit it to be emperor of the faithful. *Ziyad* had no objection to the saying his prayers, but insisted upon it that he should say nothing else, *Abul* told him, "that he could not help, encouraging what was good, and reproving what was bad." Upon this *Ziyad* finding him unalterable in his resolution, ordered his head to be struck off, which was executed accordingly.

Hejer pu
to death.

The truth is, it was no wonder if all the real sincere followers of the prophet, were friends to *Ali* and his house, and enthusiasts always suppose that dominion, is to follow grace. This doctrine was the foundation of all the opposition which *Moawiyah's* government now met with, and it was this that *Ziyad* wanted to root out. One *Hejer* was an undaunted assertor of *Ali's* sanctity, and right to the califat. His opposition was the more dangerous as he was a man of unblameable morals; eminently abstinent, and conformable, in the strictest degree, to the Mahometan faith and practice. He lived at *Cufa*. *Moawiyah* as we have already seen, reserved to himself a right to rail at *Ali*, and his generals and governors did the same, in their sermons to the people. When *Mogheirah* took that liberty, he was openly contradicted and insulted, by *Hejer*, whose great character protected him from punishment. When *Ziyad* came to the government, *Hejer* depending upon his popularity, continued his opposition. *Ziyad* being obliged to divide his time between his governments of *Basra* and *Cufa*, wanted to carry *Hejer* along with him to *Basra*. But *Hejer* under pretence of an indisposition, found means to be excused, but not before he had given *Ziyad* the most sensible marks of his attachment to the family of *Ali*, and of his disregard to *Moawiyah's* government. *Ziyad* during his residence at *Basra*, understanding that the people of *Cufa* at *Hejer's* instigation, refused to acknowledge his lieutenant there, desired *Moawiyah* to order *Hejer* to be put in irons, and sent to *Basra*. This not being done, *Ziyad* returned to *Cufa*, and calling the people together, he appeared in the pulpit magnificently dressed in silk and gold brocade, and made an oration, in which

which he asserted the dignity of his character, and gave them to know, that his authority was no more to be trampled upon. *Hejer*, like a true enthusiast, threw dust upon him, using the words "God curse thee, thou lyest." *Ziyad* took no notice of this at the time, but after going thro' the other acts of public devotion, he went to the castle, where he ordered *Hejer* to attend him. This was so far from being complied with, that the governor's messengers were insulted and beaten. *Ziyad* however, soon after found means to take him prisoner, and to send him in chains to *Moarwiyah*. That califf was by no means clear in what manner he should proceed against so popular a delinquent, and he had once some thoughts of confining him and those friends that were sent prisoners along with him, to different prisons of the empire. But *Ziyad* assured him by letter, that if he had any hope of keeping the kingdom of *Irak* he would put *Hejer* to death. The sentence being imparted to *Hejer*, he received it with all the intrepidity imaginable, and prepared himself for death, by the usual prayers and ablutions. We are told however, that when he looked upon his shroud, his grave, and the drawn sword of the executioner, who ordered him to stretch forth his neck, to receive the fatal stroke, he was daunted, but he was obliged to submit to his fate, and by his own desire, he was buried in the chains in which he had been confined, during his imprisonment. *Ayesha* is said to have interested herself greatly in favour of *Hejer*, and to have sent a messenger to *Moarwiyah* for his pardon. But her application came too late. When *Moarwiyah* on account of her hatred to *Ali*, next visited *Ayesha*, she reproached him what had become of his compassion, when he ordered *Hejer*, and his companions to be put to death. That mother, replied the califf, always leaves me when I am absent from you, and such as you. *Moarwiyah* reproached for it by *Ayesha*.

Several incidents which happened about this time, prove that *Ziyad*, as well as *Moarwiyah*, looked upon the whole system of Mahometism in no other light than a convenience for civil government. *Ziyad* had employed an officer, one *Hakem*, to reduce a castle which lay in his province. *Hakem* performed this service with vast courage and success, killing a great number of the enemy, and carrying off abundance of plunder, both in money and effects. Nothing was better understood, than that by the *Koran*, all commanding officers in such cases are to reserve a fifth part of the spoils for the poor and the public, and to distribute the remainder amongst the troops. Notwithstanding this, *Ziyad* wrote a peremptory order, for *Hakem* to send the white and the yellow, meaning the gold and silver, to the califf if there was any. But *Hakem* being a religious observer of the *Koran*, flatly refused to comply with his order, declaring that he thought the words of the *Koran* of much greater validity than the commands of the califf. He therefore without farther

Hakem's
conduct in
dividing
the spoil,

ther delay reserved a fifth part of the spoil, for the purposes above mentioned, and distributed the other four parts amongst the troops. But we are told, that he was so sensible of feeling the resentment of the califf, for what he had done, that he prayed to God to take him if he was in his favour, and that soon after he died.

Political
conduct of
Moawiyah

Every page of the Moslem authors, tho' they do not acknowledge it, convinces us, that *Moawiyah*, notwithstanding his specious behaviour, left no means unattempted, or unpractised, to secure himself in the government. The famous *Kaled*, fir-named the sword of God, who had distinguished himself so greatly, during the infancy of the califat, had left a son *Abdoraman*, who resembled his father in all his martial spirit; and thro' his own and his fathers merits, was now become exceedingly popular in the army. *Moawiyah* took umbrage at this, and tampered with a Christian servant belonging to *Abdoraman*, to poison him; promising him not only a release of his tribute, but to make him governor of *Hems*. The slave consented, and was as punctual in his undertaking, as the califf proved afterwards to his promise. But *Kaled*, *Abdoraman*'s son, understanding how his father had been put to death, killed the new governor, and all the punishment the califf inflicted upon him was, a slight imprisonment, and obliging him to pay the fine for the expiation of murder, which for that of a christian domestic was but very trifling.

Ziyad's
severity.

While *Ziyad* continued governor of *Cusa*, he persisted in his severe measures, which, considering the necessity of the times, and the disposition of the people, were perhaps wise and necessary. He even went so far, as to put a poor shepherd to death for travelling in the night time, tho' he confessed that he was sensible of the shepherd's innocent intention, but he thought, even a literal transgression of his orders, ought to be made capital, that the *Arabs* might have no plea from the innocency of their intentions, if they should wilfully transgress. This severity could be justified only by the necessity that arose for it, from the manners of the inhabitants.

He is
made go-
vernor of
Arabia.

The great point he had in view however, continued to be his forcing the people to take an oath of abjuration of *Ali* and his family. As *Moawiyah* by this time was become exceedingly fat and unweildy, and his son *Yezed* paid very little attention to affairs of state, *Ziyad* found that the powers with which he was invested, great as they were, were insufficient for carrying this great point into execution. He therefore in a manner demanded from *Moawiyah* the government of *Arabia* in the following remarkable letter. "My left hand is here employed in the government of *Irak*, while my right hand remains idle; give it *Arabia* to govern, and it will give you a good account of it." *Moawiyah*, who thought that every addition he made to *Ziyad*'s power, eased himself

himself of part of the weight of government, complied with his request, to the no small terror of the inhabitants of *Arabia*, especially to those of *Medina*; who having heard of his letter, cursed his left hand.

Amongst the first uses *Ziyad* made of his new power, was And pres-
to oblige as many of the *Arabs* as he could, to take the oath ses the ab-
of abjuration of *Ali*'s right, and that of his family to the juration of
Califat. This it is plain, was meant as a test of loyalty to *Ali*'s fa-
Muawiyah's government. But finding many of them reluc- mily.
tant, some upon principle, and others upon the declaration
that *Hasan* had made, as having been forced to resign the
government, he ordered them all to repair to certain public
places, where he intended, according to some writers, to
force them to take the oath. But while they were waiting in
painful expectation, one of *Ziyad*'s domestics came, and dis-
missed them, on pretence that his master was not at leisure.
The truth is, the plague was then raging over all *Arabia*,
and the symptoms of it had broken out, upon *Ziyad*'s
hands.

There was somewhat remarkable in the manner of *Ziyad*'s Manner
death. The excruciating pains which he had in his hands, of his
obliged him to consult with no fewer than one hundred and death.
fifty physicians, three of whom belonged to the court of
Persia. This is mentioned as a proof of that universal disposi-
tion to medicinal knowledge, which began now to prevail
amongst the *Arabs*, and which soon after distinguished them
above all the professors of that art in the world. Their
advice to *Ziyad* was that he should have his hand cut
off, but here a point of conscience occurred, and *Ziyad*
applied to a *Kadi* to know whether, as a good Moslem
he ought to submit to such an operation. The *Kadi*'s
opinion was flatly in the negative; for the following re-
markable reasons. If, said the *Kadi*, this is your time to die,
you must appear before God without a hand; which will be
very indecent; should you live, your children will be branded
with the appellation of sons of the handleless. This ridiculous
decision did not deter *Ziyad* from following the advice of
the physicians, but he was daunted by the apparatus of their
cauterizing irons, which he saw heating in the fire, and he
died in a very short time after, having been governor of *Irak*
for about five years.

We have already said enough to give the reader an idea of
the character of this very extraordinary man. But we can- His cruel-
not help thinking, that had he been concerned in governing ty
any other people but the *Arabs*, at least any people less
wedded to their own prejudices than they were, he must
have been deemed, cruel and inhuman. He is however, and that
said to have been merciful in comparison of his deputy *Sam- of his de-
rab*, whom we have already mentioned, and whose cruelties puty.
proceeded afterwards to such a height, that *Muawiyah* was
afterwards obliged to remove him from his lieutenancy.
Samrab

Samrah on this occasion made use of the usual reflection, of the instruments of tyranny in their form, and which is far from having been peculiar to Cardinal *Wolsey*. "God's curse, said he, be upon *Moawiyah*. For had I served God so well as I had served him, he never would have damned me to all eternity."

Yezed marches against Constantinople.

The foreign affairs of *Moawiyah's* reign have not been transmitted by historians, with the same accuracy as the domestic; nor is it very easy considering the inaccuracy both of Moslem and Christian authors, to fix the chronology of either. *Sapour* about the beginning of *Moawiyah's* reign, had made himself master of *Armenia*, and when that califf's power was established, both he and the *Greek* emperor, sent ambassadors to court the friendship of *Moawiyah*, who, like a true *Arab*, fairly told them, he valued neither, being both of them equally indifferent to him, but that he would favour the competitor, who should make him the most advantageous offers. We are told of some unseemly disputes which happened in the califf's palace, if not in his presence between those two ambassadors. One of whom being an eunuch, found afterwards means to qualify his antagonist in the same manner, and to send him home, with certain very provoking circumstances of disgrace. Be that as it will, it is certain that neither of them succeeded in their embassy, and that *Moawiyah* demanded no less than to be rendered lord paramount of the territories of both. Upon this, *Andrew*, for that was the name of the *Greek* ambassador, made his appeal to God, and taking leave of the califf's court returned home. Soon after this, as is reasonable to conjecture, *Moawiyah* put his son *Yezed* at the head of an army, which was to march against *Greece*, and if possible, to conquer *Constantinople*. Nothing could be more agreeable to the genius of the *Arabs*, than this expedition. It was recent in the memory of many, and known by all, that *Mahomet* in his life time, had broached a prophecy, that the sins of the army, who should first take the city of *Cesar*, should be forgiven. The few companions who were still alive, and were thoroughly impregnated with enthusiasm, put armour upon their aged limbs, and prepared with a youthful vigour, to serve under *Yezed*. In the mean while, *Sapour* had agreed to *Moawiyah's* terms, or the latter thought it good policy to assist him, for he had sent *Fadal*, one of his generals to his aid. But before *Fadal* could do him any service, *Sapour* was killed, and *Fadal* himself with his troops, were in danger of being cut to pieces; when they were seasonably relieved by *Yezed*, whose army was now increased, by the accession of *Fadal's* troops.

returns.

Yezid upon this marched to *Calcedon*, and from thence, according to the Moslem authors, he formed the siege of *Constantinople*. This however is very unlikely, tho' it is probable, that when he was at *Calcedon* he greatly distressed *Constantinople*

Constantinople. But so remarkable an event, as the forming a siege of that imperial city, was, if true, too important to have been omitted as it is, by *Theophanes*, and the other Christian writers of that time. The fatigues which the Moslem army suffered in this march were so great, that they could not proceed in their conquest. But having made a great number of prisoners, and committed large devastations they returned by the way of *Phrygia*, and took *Amorium*, in which they left an *Arab* garrison of five thousand men, probably with a view of renewing their expedition next year. But we are told that the *Greeks* taking advantage of a severe winter, retook *Amorium*, and put all the *Arabs* they found in it to the sword. In this expedition, amongst many other illustrious *Arabs*, died in a very advanced age, the famous *Abu Ayub*, the most illustrious of the surviving companions of the prophet, having served with him at the battles of *Bedar* and *Obode*. His remains were held in such veneration that even the *Ottoman* sultans upon their accession to their throne, were obliged to visit his tomb begirt with their swords.

Death of
Abu Ayub.

We have certain indistinct accounts in this califf's reign, of his generals *Moawiyah* the son of *Amer* and *Bashar*, having penetrated into the very heart of *Africa*, as far as *Karwan*, within thirty-three leagues of the ancient *Carthage*. Their troops were ten thousand men, and they reduced, in the same country, *Caran*, *Casta*, and other places. It appears that this city of *Karwan*, had been built by *Ockbah*, an *Arab* general, who, before that time, had penetrated into the country and that it was so conveniently situated that they ordered a garrison to be left in it, to repress the attempts of the faithless *Africans* against it, and those of the *Roman* and *Sicilian* fleets, and to serve as a repository for other vast treasures the califf had amassed, or proposed to amass, in that country. We are told that *Okbah* when upon this expedition, put to death a vast number of apostates, who, having once embraced the Mahometan religion, departed from it when they were no longer awed by the Moslem arms. *Karwan* answered all the purposes for which it had been built, and the *Arabs* having cleared the country round of the woods, where a great number of serpents and lethiferous animals lodged, it afterwards became a magnificent city; and one of the seats of the polite arts in *Africa*. This, with a very few immaterial additions, and perplexing conjectures, is all we know of the *African* conquests during this califat. But we must here mention, an expedition against the *Turks*, which was undertaken by *Obeidallah*. He was the son of the famous *Zi-yad*, and greatly resembled his father, in his virtues and abilities. Upon his waiting on the califf, soon after his father's death, *Moawiyah* was so pleased with his conversation, that tho' he was no more than twenty-five years of age, he appointed him governor of *Kerasan*, and appointed him to command

Affairs of
Africa.

command an expedition against the *Turks*, who inhabited on both sides the mountains of *Bochara*. In this expedition he succeeded so well, as to defeat the *Turkish* army, and their queen was so near taken prisoner, that she was obliged to leave one of her buskins in the hands of the *Arabs*, who estimated it at two thousand pieces of gold.

Maritime
power of
the *Arabs*.

But the *Arabs* about this time began to make a considerable figure at sea. *Mahomet* and *Kais*, two Moslem admirals, appeared with a strong squadron off the coast of *Cilicia*; and the division under *Mahomet* wintered at *Smyrna*, as that under *Kais* at *Lycia*, and *Cilicia*. In the spring they were reinforced by another squadron, under an admiral called *Kaled*, and their whole fleet being rendezvoused, they cruised during the whole summer, between the two promontories of *Magnauro* and *Cyclobium*. During this cruise, they appear

Hej. 53.

to have had great success against the Christians, tho' we are in the dark as to the particulars, for we are told by the *Greek* writers, who are more exact than the *Arabs* are, in

A. D 67.

point of chronology, that in the thirty-fifth year of the *Hejra*, the *Arab* fleet presented itself before *Constantinople*; and having a body of land troops on board, they attempted to besiege that city: They were however, so warmly received by *Constantine*, the *Greek* emperor, at that time, that they were obliged to retire after great loss of men and ships. These last were destroyed by a particular kind of a fire; the properties of which would be incredible, if not too well attested to be doubted. For we are told, that this fire, which was invented by *Gallinicus*, a native of *Heliopolis* in *Egypt*, burnt under water. Upon the whole therefore, tho' it is extremely surprising that the *Arabs* made the progress they did, in their marine during so short a time; yet we cannot yet consider them at this time as a maritime power, in any other light, than their being a nest of pirates infesting the seas in large, but ill disciplined, squadrons. After they were obliged to raise the siege of

Their loss
by sea.

Constantinople, their fleet met with a violent storm, which wrecked many of their ships off the *Scyllean* promontory. The emperor of the *Greeks* took advantage of the consternation of the *Arabs*, after so many repeated and dreadful losses, and gave orders for his lieutenants *Florus Petronius* and *Cyprianus*, to attack *Sophian*, *Moawiyah's* governor of *Syria*, which they did with such success, that they cut off thirty thousand of his men. This happened in the fifty-fourth of the *Hejra*, while a most dreadful mortality was raging in *Egypt*. Tho' we would willingly avoid conjectures that are too bold, yet we cannot think that the Moslem authors have been quite candid in the accounts they have transmitted of this period, since they have endeavoured to stifle the most material parts of their foreign transactions, which, undoubtedly were far from being favourable to the *Arabs*. But indeed from the whole complexion of *Moawiyah's* government, after the death of *Ziyad*, we can easily learn, that an universal depravity, and degeneracy,

neracy,

neracy of manners, encouraged by this court amongst themselves began to gain ground amongst the Moslems, and this obliges us to turn our eyes, to the domestic occurrences of this califat.

Moawiyah about the time we are now treating of, grew so *Moawiyah* fat as to be a burden to himself, so that he spoke to the *yah* grows people sitting in the pulpit, and his government became to be un- so unpopular, that he was obliged to preach before he said weildy. prayers in order to keep the people together. This unpopularity, besides the arts employed by *Ali's* party, undoubtedly arose, from his no longer making a secret, as he had done during the life time of *Ziyad*, of his design to render the califat hereditary in his family. This was a bold attempt, and *Moawiyah* never could have succeeded in it, had it not been for his army in *Syria* and *Egypt*, and other places that may be esteemed foreign to *Arabia*. *Moawiyah* was too great a politician to be insensible of the infinite power that the daily sight of sacred relicts, has upon so superstitious a people as the *Arabs* were, and for that reason he wanted to remove from *Medina* to *Damascus*, where he himself resided, the pulpit, and the walking staff of the prophet. But while those employed to remove the pulpit were attempting it, an unusual darkness, or, what the Moslem writers call an eclipse of the sun, which darkened the place, happened. This put a stop to the design, and the pulpit remained where it was. Some modern authors are fond of making this fall out during an eclipse which actually happened in the fifty-fourth year of the *Hejra*, and which is calculable upon astronomical principles. Perhaps it might, and very possibly the *Arabs* who understood astronomy, at this time, might contrive to have the operation attempted at the very instant when they knew the eclipse was to take place, in order to magnify the affair into a miracle. But after all, we are rather inclined to believe that if any darkness happened at that time, it was merely accidental, and magnified by the cunning *Medenians*, so that *Moawiyah* did not think proper to persist in his project.

He succeeded however in bringing many of the chief Declares Moslems into his design, of making his son *Yezid* to be ac- his son *Yezid* knowledged his successor. But as that title would have had *zid* his too unpopular a sound, he pretended that his natural in- successor. firmities obliged him to take an associate in the government and that none was so proper as *Yezid*. To make his design succeed the better, he wrote circular letters to the chief nobility of the *Syrians*, and *Heracians*, and many of them came into the proposal; some being bribed by motives of interest and others overawed by fear. Notwithstanding this, the body of the staunch *Arabs*, who, in fact, formed the chief opposed. strength of the Moslem empire; manifested an invincible aversion to the proposal. The *Hasbamites*, who were hated by the posterity of *Abubeker*, *Zobeir*, *Omar*. and above all by *Hosein* the brother of *Hasan*, declared themselves resolved

His pre-
sent to
Ayesha.

not to recognize *Yezid*, either as the colleague or successor of *Moawiyah*. Notwithstanding this, some such design upon *Hasan*'s application, seems to have been in agitation amongst the *Hashamites* themselves, if it be true that *Moawiyah* consented in his treaty with *Hasan*, that if he should die before *Hasan*, the califat should revert to the latter. Amongst the other opposers of *Moawiyah* on this occasion, was *Ayesha* to whom the califf paid a visit at *Medina*, attended by one thousand horse. The mother of the faithful seems upon this occasion, to have been too frail for the temptation of the present of a pair of bracelets of the value of about seventy thousand pounds. For that she received such a present is pretty certain, and we can assign no time so proper for bestowing it as the period we are now speaking of. In short it appears, that *Moawiyah* knew well how to place his munificence, for we are told, that soon after his interview with *Ayesha*, the bulk of the inhabitants of the province of *Hejaz* took the oath of recognition to *Yezid*.

Sends for
his bro-
ther.

Tho' *Moawiyah* was sensibly touched with the opposition he met with from the house of *Hasham*, and indeed from all the remains of the companions, who were now reduced to a small number, yet he durst not venture to proceed to extremities against them. Finding that they and many of their countrymen had an aversion for *Yezid*, on account of the immorality of his character, he sent for his own brother a man of great weight, and authority with the public, *Anulaph* to discourse with his son, who as *Moawiyah* assured him was indued with such parts as would remove all the prejudices that had been concerted against him. *Anulaph* however, after discoursing with his nephew, being asked by *Moawiyah*, what he thought of his sons capacity, his answer was, that the fear of God would not suffer him to tell a lie, nor the fear of the califf to speak the truth. That the califf himself was the best judge, and that the business of him and his other subjects was to hear and obey.

Yezid a
military
man,

Notwithstanding all that has been said, perhaps a great part of the public prejudice against *Yezid*, was owing to the arts of his enemies, for if we are to judge by his conduct, he was by no means so bad a man as he was represented: excepting his loose conformity to some of the ridiculous parts of the Moslem law. He indisputably was possessed of great military talents, for notwithstanding what is suggested by some christian writers, *Abu Ayub* having left his bones, under the walls of *Constantinople*, where his tomb is still to be seen, makes it more than probable, that *Yezid* led his army to the very gates of that imperial city. But whatever he wanted in experience, or abstinence, was amply supplied by his father; who still continued to dote upon him, and at last carried his point of making him his coadjutor, and consequently his successor, so far that *Yezid* in quality of coadjutor to his father, gave audience to several ambassadors
and

and executed many acts of sovereignty amongst the people, particularly towards the inhabitants of *Damascus*, with whom he stood in high favour, as indeed he did all over *Syria*. Notwithstanding this great point was thus carried, *Moawiyah's* admonitions to his son were full of wisdom, and of his op-
 Character
 moderation. He advised him never to offer any violence to ponents. *Hosein*, who was a good man, even tho' he should come into his power, and to spare the son of *Abubeker*, who being a man of pleasure, never would be dangerous to his government. As to *Abdallah* he said, that having a religious cast, and not meddling much in temporal affairs, he would recognize him when others did. But that if ever *Zobeir* should come into his power he should cut him to pieces, because said he, he has the cunning of the fox and the strength of the lion.

It cannot be supposed that so important a measure, as that of altering a great monarchy, from being elective, to be hereditary, could be carried into execution, without vast management, and some inconveniency. The people of *Abwaz* took arms against it, but *Yezid* marching against them came up with their army, which was very numerous, and seems to have been composed of more tribes or nations than one, and gave them a total defeat on the plain of *Doulab*, which reinstated the califf's authority in that part of his dominions. But *Moawiyah* was not so fortunate in other parts. The *Maronites* taking advantage of the defeat he had received from the *Greeks* in *Syria*, and the perplexities he met with in the affair of his succession, seized on mount *Lebanus*, and being soon joined by a rabble formed of Christians, and those of several other religions, they extended themselves along the plain, and at last took possession of all the country lying between mount *Taurus* and *Jerusalem*, and not contented with that, they made incursions into *Syria* which lay in the neighbourhood. Such insults joined to the bad success of the califf's arms against the *Greeks*, were novelties to the *Arabs*, and *Moawiyah* himself as well as they looked upon them as a kind of a visitation from heaven. *Moawiyah* that he might secure the main point he had in his view, was at last forced to send an embassy with proposals of peace to *Constantinople*, where they were favourably received by *Constantine*. But it seems as if his ambassador's powers were not full enough, for the emperor was obliged to send him back, together with one of his most able counsellors *John Pitzgaudes*, to compleat the treaty, which, after various difficulties was concluded upon the following terms. First, that an inviolable peace should be observed between the subjects of the emperor and the califf, for thirty years. Secondly, that the *Arabs* should retain the peaceable possession of all the provinces they had acquired. Thirdly, that the *Arabs* should pay to the emperor of *Constantinople* by way of yearly
 He suppresses a rebellion.
 Moawiyah makes peace with the Greek emperor.
 tribute

tribute, three thousand pounds weight of gold, being about two hundred and forty thousand pounds sterling; fifty slaves, and fifty horses of the best *Arab* breed.

Reflection
upon it.

This treaty was disgraceful to both nations, to the *Greeks*, as they had thereby relinquished all farther claim to so many fine provinces, that had been dismembered from their empire, by those audacious robbers; and to the *Arabs*, because it was the first time they ever had submitted to pay tribute. *Moawiyah*, however, put up with every thing that could contribute to his favourite point; in which he succeeded beyond all expectation. He was excellently well served by his nephew *Obeidallah*, whom he made governor of *Basra*; and by *Basheer*, who made a great number of inroads into the dominions of the Christians, from whence he carried off many prisoners, and a vast booty.

Character
of *Moawiyah's* go-
vernment

But nothing can give us a more just idea of the nature of *Moawiyah's* politics, than what happened in the case of the government of *Medina*. From this government, which was of great importance in *Arabia*, he had deposed *Saed*, and had ordered *Merwin* to succeed him in that post; at the same time he sent an order to *Merwin*, to demolish *Saed's* house, and to seize his effects. This order being communicated to *Saed*, he seemed startled at it; but *Merwin*, like a true minister of arbitrary power, told him, "That if *Saed* had received the same order, to be executed upon his, *Moawiyah's*, house, he would have obeyed it. Upon this *Saed* produced a like order, signed by the califf, against *Merwin*, which his friendship did not suffer him to put into execution; and thereby drew upon himself the califf's displeasure. *Merwin* struck at this, acknowledged the superior generosity of *Saed*, and never desisted to solicit the califf, till he had retracted the order. This story is a proof, that one of the principles of *Moawiyah's* government was, to divide his great men. Amongst the many remarkable events of *Moawiyah's* reign, the death of *Ayesha*, the mother of the faithful, was one. After the decease of *Mahomet*, she was the most respectable person in all *Arabia*; and was treated as such by the califfs themselves. Many of the *Arabs* even gave her the name of the prophets, and undoubtedly she was a woman of vast genius and resolution. Her brother, *Abdallah*, who died about the same time, never had recognized the hereditary right of *Yezid* to the califat, so that his death could be no disagreeable event to *Moawiyah*. For that califf, the older he grew, the more he doated upon his son *Yezid*; even to the putting up of public prayers to confirm him in the government, if he was worthy of it. But all his precaution could not give tranquility to his people; for his whole empire was at this time full of rapine and confusion. The pilgrimages, which true *Moslems* were obliged to perform once, to *Mecca*, were interrupted by continual robberies; so that *Merwin*, the gover-

exempli-
fied.

nor of *Medina*, was obliged to escort the pilgrims in person, with a body of troops. The like disorders happened through other parts of the califat, which, we are told, towards the end of this reign, was filled with murmurings and discontents. The year after the death of *Ayesha*, *Abu Horeira*, or the father of the Cat, died. He was one of the few who were in the secret of *Mahomet's* mission; and was famous for being the author of many traditions concerning the prophet, and his religion. The appellation of the father of the Cat, was the only one by which he was known, so that the knowledge of his real name and family was lost: but according to the best accounts, he was of the family of *Sackhab*.

In the sixtieth year of the Hejra, *Moawiyah* finding himself drawing towards death, sent two of his most faithful subjects to his son *Yezid*, with the following excellent advice; "That he should consider the *Arabs* as the root of his power, and to cherish them in all their applications. That he ought to look upon the *Syrians*, as being naturally devoted to him, and that the *Irakans*, or *Persians*, were by all means to be obliged, even to the granting them a new deputy every year, should they request it; because that province could, at any time, draw one hundred thousand swords against him and his government." He added, "that if the son of *Zobeir* should appear in arms against him, he should fight him, but that it was better to live in peace with him, and, by all means, to spare *Moslem* blood. Though *Moawiyah*, as has been already observed, perhaps, had not the least sentiment of religion about him; yet the nature of his government required him to be constant in preaching, and praying, to the people. In his last sermon to them, he observed, that he was like ripe corn, which called for the reaper's hand, and that he was inferior, indeed, to his predecessors; but that he was greater than any could be who should succeed him. Soon after this, he died, being about eighty years of age; and in the nineteenth year of his califat, reckoning from the resignation of *Hasan*.

Death and
character
of *Moawiyah*.

Immediately, upon his death, one *Dehak* ascended the pulpit in the mosque, with the califf's winding-sheet in his hand, and made his funeral oration; and his son *Yezid*, we are told, performed the service at his burial.

Moawiyah was tall, and comely, but very fat and his eyes somewhat projected. His voice was loud, and his breast was large. He dyed his beard, which was long, with the same red colour that his predecessors had made use of. As to his personal character, he, undoubtedly, was a man of an uncommon depth of judgment, and he seems to have no fault, but ambition, which, in fact, is productive of all others. He was liberal, to the utmost extent of generosity; and, by nature, merciful, even to a fault. By an uncommon happiness of genius, he conquered the most warlike

warlike people in the world, by the arts of peace. Being passionately fond of poetry, as indeed all the *Arabs* were; he was a noble patron of it, which appears by the following curious relation. A young *Arabian* gallant married a wife, out of mere love, and she was equally fond of him. The governor of *Cufa* was smitten with her charms, and the young *Arabian*, having laid out his whole fortune upon his beautiful wife, the governor found means to get possession of her person; though vastly against her own inclination. The disconsolate husband, now rendered poetical, by love and distress, as he had been before by inclination, repaired to the califf's court; where he repeated some beautiful verses in his hearing. The califf, touched with the air and manner of the young man, as well as with the subject of his verses, which hinted at his own misfortunes, entered into conversation with him, and learning the whole of his story, he immediately dispatched a messenger to the governor of *Cufa*, with orders for him to resign the lady. The governor, in answer, desired to have but the farther enjoyment of her for one year, and, upon that condition, he said, he was willing to have his head struck off at the expiration of the time. But this romantic declaration proving no way satisfactory to the califf, the woman was sent to his court. He had the curiosity to see her; and her charms surpassed every thing he had seen before in womankind, but fell far short of the elegance of her conversation and deportment, which astonished him. He asked her, whether she would remain with him, or go to her husband. She answered in verse, "That if he had a regard for her, he would restore her to her dear spouse, which was the sole happiness she coveted." Upon this, *Moawiyah* generously made her a present of a magnificent equipage, and gave her a sum of money, which reimbursed the husband for all that he had expended upon her. *Moawiyah's* passion for poetry even extended to his dispensing with the common forms of justice upon that account; for we are told, that he even pardoned a robber, for his excellency in the poetic art. The reader, however, is to observe, that the *Arab* language is naturally so figurative and lofty, that whenever it is elevated above the ordinary forms of speech, it slides into poetry.

Moawiyah's generosity.

Moawiyah was by nature so excessively liberal, that he was often known to desire those for whom he had any esteem, to take with them out of his palace whatever they most fancied. At one time he made a present of four millions of dinars, which amounted to near three millions sterling, to *Hasan*; and his other liberalities, both to him and his friends, are incredible. His patience was equal to his generosity. *Hesant*, who was a *Heshemite*, and a very old woman, came over to pay him a visit, but did not fail to upbraid him very severely, for his usurping the

the califat, in prejudice to the family of *Hasan*; and even loaded him with some very bitter expressions on that account. The great *Omru*, who happened to be present at the time, told her she talked like an old mad woman. "What," replied she, "thou son of a whore, dost thou prate? Thy mother was the most notorious strumpet, that ever plied upon the streets of *Mecca*, and the cheapest at the same time; she could not even tell who was thy father, out of five of the *Koreish*, who lay with her, at the time thou was begotten, and said, you must be given to him whom you resembled most, who happened to be old *Allas*; and for no other reason art thou esteemed his son." The califf, far from being disconcerted at this impertinence, with great mildness, said, "Forgive what is past;" and desired to know of his aunt, what was her demand. She answered, two thousand dinars for the poor of their family; two thousand to marry her portionless kinswomen, and two thousand for her own use, as she was then poor; all which was instantly paid her down, by the califf's order.

To conclude *Moawiyah*'s character, both in private and public life he was amiable, but, like *Julius Cæsar*, he broke through all ties to gratify his ambition. He may be justly said to have been the first califf who altered the genius of the *Arabs*, by introducing among them habits of luxury, dissimulation, and intrigue, and from the compliances he made, both at home and abroad, it is plain, he thought that no sacrifice could be too great to his love of power.



C H A P. IV.

Yezid, the fourth califf from Mahomet, and the second of the house of Ommiyah.

THE change of the constitution of the califat, from an electoral, to an hereditary, monarchy, was so violent, that *Yezid* easily foresaw that he would have some difficulty in getting his rights acknowledged by the staunch Moslems of *Arabia*. It was, however, acknowledged in *Mesopotamia*, *Egypt*, *Persia*, and some other countries. *Hosein*, who was the surviving head of the house of *Ali*, seems never to have acknowledged *Moawiyah*'s power of altering the succession, and both he and *Abdallah*, the son of *Zobeir*, made no secret that they looked upon *Yezid* as an usurper; and in this they were backed by the people of *Mecca*, and *Medina*, in general. *Yezid* was aware of this, and

He is succeeded by his son, *Yezid*.

His letter
against
Abdallah:

and sent to *Waled*, *Ali*'s governor of *Medina*, the following Laconic letter, which is here inserted as a specimen of the epistolary stile of the *Arabs*. "In the name of the most merciful God, from *Yezid*, commander of the faithful, to *Waled*, the son of *Othbah*. *Moawiyah* was a servant of God. God honoured him, made him califf, enlarged his dominions, and strengthened him. He fulfilled the date of his life, and God received him into his mercy. In his life he was beloved, and when he died he was innocent and pure. Farewell, take care strictly to insist, that *Hosein*, *Abdallah* the son of *Amru*, and *Abdallah* the son of *Zobeir*, conform themselves in every respect to the inauguration." The governor upon receipt of this letter, consulted with *Merwin*, the most considerable person upon the spot in the califf's interest, how he should behave. *Merwin*'s advice was, that *Waled* should tender to the persons mentioned in the order, the oath of allegiance to *Yezid*, and that if they made any scruple, he should instantly strike off their heads. Though *Waled* was secretly determined not to follow this bloody advice, yet he would have been glad if *Hosein*, and his two friends, would have recognized the califf's authority. He therefore sent for *Hosein*, who had foreseen his danger, and he came to the governor's house, attended by a great number of friends and relations, whom he posted at the door, with orders to break in, if they should perceive any disturbance. *Merwin* was at this time with *Waled*, who tendered the oath of allegiance to *Hosein*, who absolutely declined it, till he had an opportunity of taking the sense of his countrymen; adding, that a matter of such importance should be transacted in public, and with unanimity. Upon this *Merwin* again pressed the governor to take off *Hosein*'s head. But the latter sprung from their hands, and rejoined his friends, bitterly upbraiding *Merwin* for his bloody advice; and he at the same time reproaching *Waled* for his tenderness. But *Waled* excusing himself, by declaring that the ballance of that man's sins, who should kill *Hosein* would be heavy in the next world.

who
escapes.

Waled, however, attempted to get *Abdallah*, the son of *Zobeir* into his hands, but he escaped out of *Medina*, and though he was pursued by a body of horse, he reached *Mecca* safe, with all his family, and was, soon after, followed by *Hosein*. It seems to be pretty plain, that there was at this time a determined conspiracy to dethrone *Yezid*; who was so out of humour with *Waled*, that he gave the government of *Medina* to *Amru*, the son of *Saed*. This new governor knew that *Abdallah* *Zobeir* was mortally hated by his brother *Omar*, and he therefore employed him to reduce or destroy him. But *Abdallah* met his brother in the field, defeated him, and took him prisoner.

In the mean while, the important city of *Cufa* declared unanimously for *Hosein*, and invited him to reside amongst them.

them. Upon this *Hosein* sent his friend *Moslim*, the son of *Cufa de-Okail*, to learn the state of his affairs amongst the *Irakans*, clares for and the *Cufans*, and with orders to pursue his journey with *Hosein*. all the secrecy and expedition possible. *Moslim* encountered the most discouraging difficulties, in his road from *Mecca*, where he left *Hosein*, to *Cufa*; and was once determined to have returned, both the guides he had along with him being dead, with fatigue. But he received fresh orders from *Hosein*, to proceed at all events. At last he had the good fortune to reach *Cufa*, where he found the people, almost unanimously, determined to join *Hosein*, and they proceeded with so much secrecy, which is the soul of all conspiracies, that eighteen thousand of them promised to be ready in arms, before *Nooman*, the governor for *Yezid*, knew that *Moslim* was at *Cufa*. The conspirators, however, growing too numerous to be longer concealed, *Nooman* made a speech to the people, exhorting them to loyalty, and threatening them, in case of disobedience. But he was far from being attended to, and being a native of *Medina*, *Yezid* suspected him of disaffection, and gave his government to *Obeidallah*, the son of *Ziyad*, who was at the same time governor of *Basra*.

When we consider the history of *Yezid's* government at *Reflec-* this time, we are confirmed in our former opinion, that he tion on was by no means either so weak, or wicked, a prince, as *Yezid's* some of the violent *Moslem* authors, have represented him. govern- It appears, that he continued all his father's servants and ment. governors in their several posts; and he heaped favours upon *Obeidallah*, notwithstanding the reasons he had to be displeased with his father. As to his right to the califat, it was, at least, as good as that of *Hosein*, who lay under personal obligations to *Moawiyah*, and had even served under *Yezid*, in his expedition against *Constantinople*. It is true, there seemed amongst the *Arabs* to be a general disposition in favour of *Hosein*; but the reader will soon perceive that the people of *Cufa*, on whom he most depended, were actuated by no principle, but that of inconstancy, and a desire to change. *Moslim's* first success at *Cufa*, elated him so much, that he sent letters to *Hosein* at *Mecca*, earnestly desiring him to repair to *Cufa*, where he was sure of being joined by upwards of one hundred thousand friends. In the mean while *Obeidallah*, who inherited his father's dislike to the house of *Ali*, came, attended by no more than seventeen horse, to *Cufa*. It was almost night before he entered the city, and being dressed in a black turban, *Hosein's* usual wear, he was welcomed by the people, as the grandson of the prophet. By this mistake, *Obeidallah* got possession of the castle; and by employing one of his domestics to assume the character of a *Syrian* nobleman, who was come to see the solemnity of *Hosein's* inauguration, he by this means learned, that *Moslim* was still in *Cufa*, and busied in in-

lifting

Conspira-
cy against
him,

lifting men, and buying up arms. He found that the names of his two chief friends, in the place, were *Sharick*, and *Hani*, and that *Moslim* at that time lived in *Sharick's* house, having but some days before left that of *Hani*. *Obeidallah*, knowing *Sharick* to be a man of quality, or Emir, sent him word he was to pay him a visit, and *Sharick* planted *Moslim* in a corner of the room, where he persuaded him to assassinate *Obeidallah*, upon a concerted signal. *Moslim*, however, feeling remorse at the thoughts of so infamous an action, the design miscarried, and *Obeidallah* escaped. *Sharick*, who was sick in bed at this time, died two days after, but *Hani* was arrested, and sent to prison in the castle. Being brought before *Obeidallah*, he commanded him to produce *Moslim*, and upon *Hani's* declaring, that he would not, if he could, *Obeidallah* forgot himself so far, that he struck *Hani* on the face, with a truncheon that he had in his hand. *Hani*, upon this, attempted to snatch a sword from one of *Obeidallah's* guards, but he was overpowered, and remanded to prison.

at Cufa,

Moslim hearing of his friends danger, assembled together about four hundred of his party, and attempted to force his way into the castle. But *Obeidallah* without being daunted, harrangued the rebels from the walls so effectually, that all of them, excepting about thirty, abandoned *Moslim*. This irresolution taught him what he was to expect from so perfidious a set of men, and he was obliged to leave *Cufa*, without a single attendant, and for the first night he found shelter in the house of an old lady, to whom he had been obliged to discover his name. But her son coming to the knowledge of it, betrayed him to *Obeidallah*, who put a reward upon his head, and sent a party of one thousand horse who surrounded the house where he was. *Moslim* made a most desperate defence, and three times beat back such of the party as entered the house to take him, but, at last, being most desperately wounded, he was overpowered, and carried back, upon his own mule, prisoner to *Cufa*. He was seen to weep, but it was in reflecting upon *Hosein's* danger, whom he supposed to be upon the road to join the perfidious *Cufans*, and used all the few means that were in his power, to apprise him of what had happened. When *Moslim* was brought before *Obeidallah*, he refused to show him any exterior mark of respect, and declared he would not pay any to *Yezid* himself, was he present. *Obeidallah* upbraided him for the disturbances he had made, and he in his turn reproached *Obeidallah* with the cruelties of his father *Ziyad*, and treated him with the stale language of all rebels, who pretend to reformation. It would have been weakness in *Obeidallah* to have pardoned such a delinquent, but he gave him leave to make his will, which he did, leaving to a friend about five-hundred pound sterling, with a charge to do all he could to stop *Hosein* from advancing. When this was re-
ported

ported to *Obeidallah*, he ordered both *Moslim* and *Hani* to be beheaded, but he spoke of *Hosein* with respect, and declared he had nothing to fear, provided he would be quiet for the future, but that if he disturbed the government, he might expect the consequences.

The unhappy *Hosein* by this time deluded by the advices in favour he had received from *Cufa*, and the list sent him, of one hundred and forty thousand men, who were to join him in *Irak*, of *Hosein*. the province in which *Cufa* lay, had set out from *Mecca* contrary to the advice of all his friends. His descent, and his personal virtues, and his sanctity, had rendered him so much the idol of the *Meccans*, that while he was there *Abdallah Zobeir*, who himself secretly aspired to the califat, notwithstanding the victory he had gained over his brother and the califf's troops, found he made no figure, while *Hosein* was upon the spot. The perfidy of the *Cufans* towards *Ali's* family, had been so notorious, that *Hosein's* best friends thought it was worse than madness in him to trust himself in their hands, and his cousin *Abdallah*, the son of *Abbas*, remonstrated very strongly to him upon that head, but to no purpose. *Abdallah Zobeir* pretended to talk to him in the same strain, but upon *Hosein* declaring to him the vast numbers of the *Shii* who had enlisted in his party, *Zobeir* seemed to alter his opinion, and encouraged him to proceed, in hopes no doubt but he was going upon his ruin. This confirming *Hosein* in his resolution, his friends renewed their attacks to dissuade him, at least, from the one part of his design, that of taking his family along with him, for said the son of *Abbas* to him, by God I fear your case will be like *Othman's*, who was murdered in the sight of his wives and children. He then represented to *Hosein* the shallow part he was acting in making way for the ambition of *Abdallah Zobeir* who was secretly his rival: All those and a great many other remonstrances, were lost upon *Hosein*. At last they intreated him if he was determined to leave *Mecca*, to go to the province of *Hejaz*, which was full of inaccessible passes, where he could maintain himself till he saw whether the *Cufans* would destroy *Obeidallah*, whose troops were in possession of all the plain country, and in the mean time they advised *Hosein* to write circular letters to all who had enlisted in his cause, and to require them to repair to his standard. The infatuated *Hosein* deaf to all this wholesome advice, set out with his family from *Mecca* the very day, on which *Moslim* was beheaded at *Cufa*. *Obeidallah* was too vigilant not to be exactly informed of his motions, and tho' he would have been glad to have avoided coming to extremities, yet he sent an officer one *Harro*, at the head of one thousand horse, to bring him a kind of prisoner to *Cufa*, if he persisted to advance. *Harro* had a warm side to *Hosein*, but being a man of honour, he executed his orders, and at the same time, he assured *Hosein* that he was egregiously imposed

who is deluded, and marches towards *Cufa*;

imposed upon, if he expected to be joined by any considerable number of men in that province, as all the nobility to a man were engaged by *Obeidallah*, in *Yezid's* interest. Upon this *Hosein* pulled out the letters of invitation, and the lists he had received from *Cufa*, but the reading them made no impression upon *Harro*, who continued to assure him he was deceived. *Hosein* upon this endeavoured to bring *Harro* over to his party, but not succeeding in that, he ordered his attendants to advance, which *Harro* opposed. This put *Hosein* in a passion, and he gave him the *Arabian* curse may your mother be childless of you. To this *Harro* politely answered, that he should have known how to have dealt with any other person, who had mentioned his mother in that manner, but that the mother of *Hosein*, was of too sacred memory to be mentioned but with respect. He then offered to see *Hosein* safe, and to leave him at liberty if he would take any other road than that of *Cufa*, assuring him, that he had no orders to act with violence against him, and hoping that some means might be found out to make up matters between him and *Yezid*. At last *Hosein* began to give some ear to this friendly advice, and consented to turn a little out of the way till he should come to *Kadesia*, where a battle was afterwards fought between the *Persians* and the *Turks*. Upon his march thither he was met by one of his friends *Thirmah*, who acquainted him with the desperate state of his affairs at *Cufa*, where *Kais* one of his messengers had been put to death, and conjured him to retire to the mountain *Aja*, which was an impregnable pass, and where he was sure of being joined by ten thousand of the tribe of *Taye*. *Hosein* rejected this advice and marched on towards *Nineva*, which lies at some distance from the antient situation of that city. But by this time *Obeidallah* receiving intelligence that *Ali's* friends were every where in motion sent an order to *Harro*, to prevent *Hosein* from making himself master of any place of strength, till the troops, which were on their march against him could come up. *Harro* now perceiving that *Hosein's* destruction was resolved on, became an intire convert to his party; and told him that he must be ruined if he was attacked. Next day *Amer*, who commanded four thousand men, that were on their march against *Hosein* came up, and was joined by the one thousand horse, that had been led by *Harro*. It was with great difficulty, that *Amer* had been prevailed upon to go upon this disagreeable command, and having entirely surrounded *Hosein's* small party, which did not consist of above eighty or ninety men, several interviews, were held between him and *Hosein*, who now offered to return home, if *Obeidallah* would give him leave.

but
is inter-
cepted.

Amer upon this wrote for fresh instructions to *Obeidallah*, who would listen to no proposal, unless *Hosein* would acknowledge *Yezid's* authority, and in the mean time ordered

Amer

Amer to cut off all communication, between *Hosein* and the neighbouring branches of the *Euphrates*, that *Hosein* for want of water might be obliged to surrender at discretion. *Amer* was obliged to comply with this rigorous order, and then made a fresh application to *Obeidallah* upon *Hosein* proposing either to go to *Yezid*, to return to *Arabia*, or to have leave to serve against the *Turks*. Tho' *Obeidallah*, had some His difficulties. inclination to enter upon this treaty, yet he was dissuaded from it by one *Shamer*, a bloody enemy to *Hosein*, who accused *Amer* of underhand dealing. This was too tender a point for *Obeidallah* to neglect, and to clear himself from all suspicion, he gave *Shamer* the command of five-thousand men more to reinforce *Amer*, with a private order to strike off *Amer*'s head if he should find him favouring *Hosein*. He added that *Hosein* and his party were to expect no quarter if they delayed longer to surrender or recognize *Yezid* as the lawful califf.

All this past, at a place called *Kerbela* where *Hosein* then was. He was now full of melancholy apprehensions, for his approaching fate, and that of his family and followers, and a very affecting scene passed, between him and his sister. For *Amer* no sooner received *Obeidallah*'s letter, which upbraided him for his dilatory proceedings, than he drew out his men in order of battle, and notified to *Hosein* that he must either surrender, swear allegiance to *Yezid*, or expect with all his followers to be cut in pieces. About the same time, he offered *Obeidallah*'s protection to four brothers of *Hosein*, who were along with him, but they rejected it, saying they chose to trust in God's protection, rather than that of a son of a whore, alluding to *Obeidallah*'s parentage. *Hosein* melted by the fidelity of his relations and followers, exhorted them to provide for their own safety, but they unanimously declared, that they would stand by him to their last breath. He however obtained from *Amer* a truce till next morning, it being after evening prayer when *Amer*'s summons came to him. He made the best use of his time, by linking his tents to one another with cords, and thereby forming a barricade, so as to prevent being flanked thro' the superiority of the enemy, and he fortified his camp in the rear with a deep ditch, which he filled with combustibles, and then with his friends which according to some authors, now consisted of one hundred footmen and fifty horse, he took post in the front of his camp, between the two interlaid rows of tents. This appears to have been the best disposition *Hosein* could have made, considering his situation and circumstances, especially against an enemy who were very backward to attack him, for *Harro* seeing that it was now determined he should be destroyed, came over to him with thirty horse, and expressed great concern, for the part he had acted, promising at the same time never to leave him.

After *Hosein* had taken the best precautions he could to off by He is cut
sell his life, (for he had no idea of keeping it,) as dear as pos- Obedal-
sible .

*Lab's or-
ders.*

sible, he went into his tent, where he washed and perfumed himself with a particular kind of musk, and his friends did the same, upon seeing the dispositions made by *Amer*, saying, nothing now hinders us from meeting the black eyed girls, but that those people should come and cut us to pieces. *Hosein* then mounting his horse, addressed his people, with the *Koran* open before him, and exhorted them in the most pathetic terms to behave bravely, placing his son *Ali* on horseback by his side. This preparation renewed the lamentations of the women, whom *Hosein* sent his son and brother to comfort and pacify. *Amer's* troops were now approaching, when *Harro* stepping out addressed himself with a loud voice to *Amer*, and again endeavoured to bring matters to an accommodation. But *Amer* pleading the positive orders of *Obeidallah* which left him no room for such a proposal, *Harro* addressed himself to the *Cufans*, whom he reproached in the most bitter manner for not only having deceived the prophets grand-son, but for appearing against him in arms and for having cut off from him and his family, the waters of the *Euphrates*, where Jews, Christians, and Heathens, have the privilege to drink, and where even dogs, and hogs solace themselves.

Remarkable
circumstances
of
his death.

His reproaches however were to no purpose, for *Amer* tho' backward, was obliged to order his ensigns to advance, and *Shamer* letting fly an arrow called all the army to witness that he was the first who had discharged a bow against *Hosein*. After this, the most gallant of the *Saracens*, on both sides, challenged each other, as usual to single combats, and several were fought, in which *Hosein's* friends had always a superiority. *Amer* therefore put a stop to that kind of fighting; and a general onset was immediately ordered. *Amru* commanded the right wing, as *Shamer* did the left, but they met with so gallant a reception, from *Hosein* and his handful of friends, that they were repulsed, and they were obliged to send to *Amer* who commanded the main body, for five-hundred archers. A few discharges of their arrows killed all *Hosein's* horse, but his friends fought so desperately on foot, that *Amer* finding them impenetrable in the front, gave orders to break thro' the tents, that they might be attacked in flank and rear. *Shamer* (the Moslem authors bid God confound him for it) called for fire to burn *Hosein's* tent, into which he struck his javelin, which made the women run out of it with a dreadful fright. What? burn my family said *Hosein* to *Shamer*, God burn thee in hell fire. Upon this he and his friends attacked *Shamer* with so much fury, that he was driven to some distance, and even his own officers upbraided him for his unsoldier-like proceeding against the ladies. But the friends of *Hosein* were by this time reduced to a small number; all of them who died, falling like heroes. When the hour of noon prayer came *Hosein* desired a truce till he had performed his devotions, which

which seems to have been granted him, and he said some extraordinary prayers, one particularly called the prayer of fear, which is never used but in the article of death. When this service was ended, *Shamer* ashamed of meeting with such resistance from such a handful, renewed the attack with more fury than ever, and directed it against *Hosein's* own person. But he was bravely defended by his few remaining friends, one of whom killed ten of his assailants with his own hand, but at last had his head struck off by *Shamer*. At last the archers were directed to take their aims, and in a very few minutes they singled out and killed all *Hosein's* followers his son *Ali* having been killed before. During this melancholy scene, *Hosein* was always repeating some devout ejaculation, and speaking of the *Cufans*, he said, let not the dews of heaven distil upon their heads, and withhold from them the blessings of the earth, for they first invited me and then deceived me.

Hosein's party being now reduced to his own person, even his Moslem enemies were touched with such compassion, that none of them would kill him. But the reader is not to imagine that *Yezid's* army upon this occasion, was entirely composed of true Moslems, a great many of them in their hearts continued to be Pagans, Christians or Jews, and had no such tenderness for the grandson of the prophet. One of those hit him on the head, upon which he threw away his skull-cap, which was full of blood, and bound up his wound with a turban. After this, for some time none were so barbarous as to approach him, he sat down by the door of his tent, and placed his young son *Abdallah* in his lap, but the child was immediately killed with an arrow, for which his father throwing some of his blood in the air called for vengeance from heaven. Soon after, one of his nephews, a beautiful child, came to embrace him but the child's hand was cut off, while he was stretching it to his unfortunate uncle, which produced from him another bitter exclamation. *Hosein* himself having in vain sought for death, at last finding himself oppressed with thirst, called for water, but while he was drinking, an arrow struck him in the mouth, upon which extending his hands, then all full of blood, he renewed his prayers for vengeance. *Shamer* having now collected some of the hardened barbarians of his party, exhorted them to take that opportunity to dispatch him. But *Zeinab*, *Hosein's* sister by *Fatimar*, addressed herself to *Amer*, for compassion, but all that *Amer* could do was to shed a few tears, and turn his head from her, while *Hosein* was defending himself with most amazing courage, against *Shamer's* party. He sunk however at last under his wounds. When he was dead they cut off his head, and they found that he had received thirty-three wounds, and thirty-four bruises.

The reader by the description of this encounter, will easily perceive the prodigious reluctance of the califf's army
in Reflection upon it.

in general, to destroy the grandson of the prophet, for whatever the Moslem authors may pretend, had it not been for that backwardness, ten thousand troops could not have been so long in dispatching one hundred and fifty men, whose flanks were only secured by a barrocade of tents. The whole of the tragedy was owing, to *Obeidallah's* hatred to the house of *Hasan*, and the brutality of *Shamer*. This barbarian intended to have put the younger son of *Hosein* who was likewise called *Ali*, to death, but finding that the murder would be disagreeable to the army, he forbore it. His men however, plundered *Hosein's* tents, and even stript the ladies of their richest clothes, against the command of *Amer*. *Hosein's* head was sent to *Obeidallah*, but the messenger who carried it coming too late, brought it to his own house, where his wife understanding whose head it was, swore by God, that he and she never should sleep again in the same bed. The head having been for some time exposed in *Cufa*, was then sent to *Yezid* at *Damascus*. But *Yezid* far from enjoying the bloody trophy, curst *Obeidallah*, as being the author of *Hosein's* death, and declared with tears, that had he been in his power, he would not have hurt him.

Yezid's

generosity
to *Hosein's*
family.

While this past at *Damascus*, *Zeinab*, and young *Ali* with the other females, taken prisoners, in *Hosein's* tent, were carried to *Cufa*, where *Obeidallah* bestowed upon them as he had done upon the head of *Hosein* before, many unmanly insults. It was even with difficulty, that he was prevailed upon, not to strike off young *Ali's* head, because he was reported to have arrived at the years of puberty. His sparing him was owing to his being touched with the generous intercession of *Zeinab*, who begged in the most earnest manner, if *Ali* was killed, that she might attend him to the next world. At last an order came for carrying the illustrious prisoners to *Damascus*, for which city they set out with a party of men, and *Shamer* and another officer for their guard. *Ali* who shewed a becoming sullenness during the journey, was carried before the sultan, and the ladies appeared in the most abject habits. Some of *Yezid's* counselors advised him to put *Ali* to death, while others were for mercy, which proved more agreeable to the califf's dispositions, for he not only gave *Ali* his life, but publicly bewailed the death of *Hosein*, and cursed *Obeidallah*, for having suffered the women to be plundered, and obliging them to appear in the mean attire they did. But he could not get the better of the high spirit of *Fatima* and *Zeinab*, *Hosein's* daughters, who even reproached him for the death of their father. He however treated both them, *Ali*, and a little brother he had, with the utmost tenderness and affection. He gave them apparel suitable to their quality, and never went abroad without taking along with him the two sons of *Hosein*. He once asked the younger, if he would fight his son *Kaled*, to which the boy fiercely replied, give him one knife and

and me another. But even this did not abate the califf's kindness ; and, by his direction, the widows of his father *Moawiyah*, visited, and lived, with the female prisoners, while they were at *Damascus*, and performed along with them the funeral prayers, and rites, in memory of *Hosein*. At last, when the ladies chose to depart for *Medina*, he dismissed them, with an escort, commanded by an officer, who behaved towards them with so much respect and tenderness, that they offered him, in a present, their bracelets, which were set with jewels ; which the officer refused, with vast politeness. We are father told, that when *Zeinab*, and *Fatimar*, came before the califf, a *Syrian* nobleman begged of him the latter, for his wife or concubine. But she clung to her sister, who maintained that the *Syrian* asked a thing impossible, because of the difference in their religions, adding to the califf, " by God it is neither in his power nor yours to do it, and I say so, should I die for it." This remarkable story serves to confirm the character of clemency we have already attributed to *Yezid*, and shews the extreme tenderness of the Mahometans in matters of religion. For we are told, that when *Yezid* was provoked by this language, and accused *Zeinab's* father as a Sismatic, she recriminated upon him and his family, which exasperated him so much, that he said, " Thou liest, thou enemy of God." Upon this *Zeinab* taunted him for his unmanly behaviour to two women, who were his prisoners ; which put the califf to the blush, and he not only cursed the *Syrian* nobleman for renewing his petition, but dismissed the ladies with great kindness.

Thus ended, with his life, the attempt of *Hosein*, who seems to have been possessed of all the courage, enthusiasm, and situation of his family. Like other good *Moslems*, the more he prayed, the better he fought ; and the acts of devotion reported of him, seem almost incredible, though transmitted by very good authorities. It is extremely plain, that *Yezid's* claim of power was founded upon his being califf, and consequently *Mohammed's* successor, both as a sovereign, and a priest, or *Iman* ; and that he looked upon those two characters as inseparable. This undoubtedly was a maxim the most advantageous for the tranquillity of the state, but he could not root out from the minds of the common people the supremacy and sanctity of the prophet's family. The great men, however, seem to have adopted the soundest system, and to have disclaimed all belief in the infallibility of *Mohammed's* descendants, which had they acknowledged, must have led them to the most abject slavery. The califf, it is true, pretended to be despotic, but in fact he was far otherwise, and was obliged to consult, in all acts of government, the great men under him ; which would not have been the case, had infallibility descended by descent with the califf. In short, notwithstanding

standing all the enthusiasm of the times, and the people, the understanding part of the *Arabs* were far from being slaves to the doctrines of *Mohammed*; though they were obliged outwardly to conform to an infinite regard for his memory. This was the true reason of the prostrations, prayers, and ablutions, which they made at certain times; but it is evident, that the real value they put upon *Mohammed's* doctrine, was his having delivered his followers from the belief of more Gods than one. This was a solid doctrine, because the Christians of those days, and countries, were so grossly ignorant, that they could neither enforce nor explain the Christian religion, without making it more absurd, to an intelligent being, than Mahometanism itself. But to return to our history.

His burial The *Cufans* were an inconstant, perfidious people; but at the same time very susceptible of passion, and it required a person of *Obeidallah's* severity, and resolution, to keep them in awe. Upon the suppression of *Hosein's* attempt, he endeavoured, in a public assembly, to prove that *Yezid* was a true *Iman*, or center of unity, and he thanked God that he had been able to destroy the liar *Hosein*, the son of the liar *Ali*. The common people could not bear those insults upon the family of the prophet, and an old *Moslem*, who had lost both his eyes in battle, but retained his enthusiasm, called him a liar, and the son of a liar. *Obeidallah*, immediately gave orders for his being seized, but he was saved by seven hundred of his party who defended him. *Obeidallah*, however, provoked by this resistance, laid his scheme so well, that, some time after, the offender was seized, and hung upon a gibbet. This severity, though necessary, raised *Obeidallah* a great many enemies; but the compliances of *Yezid*, in suffering *Hosein's* head, and body, to be buried, according to the request of his family and friends, kept the public quiet. Sumptuous monuments were afterwards erected in both places, by califfs of the *Fatimate* family; for so they defined themselves, to shew their immediate descent from *Fatimar*, the daughter of the prophet. Her family, however, was greatly weakened by the conflict at *Kerbelah*; for we are told by some, that no fewer than seven sons of *Ali* were killed there, and three of *Hosein*; who, at the time of his death, was fifty-five years of age.

Great exploits of Salem.

Besides *Obeidallah*, the famous *Ziyad* had another son, *Salem*, who resembled himself so much, the *Yezid* appointed him, when he was twenty-four years of age, governor of *Sejistan*, and *Korasan*. The *Turks* at this time had been very troublesome, by their incursions upon the califf's dominions. They are a people who are to make a figure in this history, but great doubts arise as to their original. The most probable is, that, in general, it was *Tartar*, and that their forefathers having seized some of the provinces, *Medina*

dia in particular, which had been in a manner depopulated, when the *Roman* empire went to decay their numbers were increased, by a resort to them of adventurers from all nations, who could not live in their own countries. Be this as it will, it is certain that at the time we now treat of, they began to be considerable. They were composed of Pagans, Christians, and Jews, and the great numbers of the latter amongst them, has given rise to an opinion amongst many learned men, that the bulk of the nation were descended from the ten tribes of the *Jews*, who were led into captivity by *Salmanasar*, king of *Assyria*. Though this is by no means an improbable opinion, yet we cannot be induced to think that there were amongst them any actual *Jews*, though it seems past all doubt, that many of them had more than a glimmering of the Jewish religion and rites ; which indeed appear to have been dissipated through many other countries. Neither is it at all improbable, that the *Assyrians* might, by way of precaution, and punishment, send the *Jews* into *Scythia*, or the modern *Tartary*, where the *Turks* undoubtedly had their original, they being mentioned both by *Mela* and *Pliny*, amongst the other people living near the *Tanais*, and the *Mæotic Lake*. Their settlement in *Media* and *Armenia*, and the more southern countries, appears unquestionable, from *Arab* authors to have been much more early than what is assigned them by very learned authors among the Christians ; and there is strong reason for believing that being a brave, but a needy people, they were invited by some of the *Persian* monarchs, to serve them against the *Greeks* and *Arabs*. At the time we now treat of, they seem to have been settled near a branch of the *Euphrates*, between the *Euxine*, and the *Caspian* sea ; but their profound ignorance of letters has prevented our coming at the knowledge of the real territories they possessed. A province, however, there, His vast
which still retains the name of *Turk Armenia*, was most progress
probably their chief residence, though it seems past doubt, and suc-
cess,
that their arms reached all along the coast of the *Caspian* sea, and as far as *Samarcand*. For we are told, that *Salem*, having got together a fine army of horse, advanced to *Sogdiana*, or the modern *Zugathay* ; he had along with him his wife, who was brought to bed in that neighbourhood. She is said to have borrowed the crown and jewels of the queen of *Sogdiana*, and never to have returned them ; but this is far from being probable. It is more likely that those jewels were sent as a peace offering to *Salem* ; whose arms made a rapid progress in that country. If what the *Arab* authors say, whose veracity we have little reason to doubt on this head, be true, this *Salem* was by far the most successful conqueror that had ever yet appeared amongst the *Arabs*, for he carried his arms to *Kowaraxam*, the *Chorasma* of *Ptolomy*, and *Herodotus* ; and the capital of a kingdom of the same name, about twenty-five *German* leagues east from the *Caspian* Sea.

Sea. This was one of the richest spots at that time in the world ; and it is not improbable that *Salem* made his expedition against the *Turks*, only as a pretext for invading it. According to the Moslem authors, *Mohalleb*, his general, levied no less than fifty millions of pieces of money upon the inhabitants, which, supposing every piece of money to amount to two shillings and sixpence, sterling, make the sum of six millions, two hundred and fifty thousand pounds, which he divided between himself and *Yezid*. After this, *Salem* or *Mohalleb*, or both, marched to *Samarcand*, and forced the inhabitants there, likewise, to pay them an immense sum of money. It is to be bewailed by the learned, that no *Arab* author has yet been discovered, who give the particulars of this expedition, though it seems to have been the greatest the *Arabs* had ever yet undertaken. For all we learn was, that it brought them in an immense sum, and that they made themselves masters of *Khorasan*.

The *A-*
rabs de-
pose *Yezid*

The indignation of the califf's subjects, at the death of *Hosein*, began about this time to create a prodigious ferment through all his dominions, particularly *Arabia*. *Abdallah Zobeir* was now the most formidable opposer of the house of *Omer*; the sons of *Hosein* having neither the age nor spirit for a great undertaking. *Abdallah* put himself at the head of the *Hassemites*, who continued still to be the most respectable family in all *Arabia*. We are informed, but not by what means, that he never had recognized the authority of *Yezid*, as califf; but the truth is, the inhabitants, both of *Medina* and *Mecca*, trusting to the sanctity of their cities and families, affected a kind of independency upon the califf, and scarcely considered him in any other light, than as being the sovereign of *Syria*. The sight of *Hosein's* distressed family, upon their return to *Medina*, revived all their affection for the prophet's family, and though *Abdallah* had wished for nothing more than *Hosein's* death, he aggravated every circumstance of it so much in his public harangues to crowded audiences, that he was proclaimed califf both at *Medina*, and *Mecca*. *Yezid*, who still resided at *Damascus*, in *Syria*, was so well informed of the state of *Arabia*, that he sent to *Merwan* his governor of *Medina*, a silver collar, with orders to put it about the neck of *Abdallah Zobeir*, and to bring him prisoner in it to *Damascus*. But *Abdallah's* interest was grown so strong, that *Merwan* durst not attempt to seize him. *Abdallah Amru*, an *Arab* of great learning who resided in *Egypt*, gave it as his opinion to *Amru Said*, *Yezid's* governor of *Mecca*, that *Abdallah Zobeir* would succeed in his pretensions, and this being made public increased his party. Upon this some of *Yezid's* great men of *Damascus*, hinting to him, that *Amru*, who seems to have been, at this time, governor of *Medina*, as well as *Mecca*, was in *Abdallah's* interest; *Yezid* took a resolution to remove him from both his governments, though nothing could be worse judged, because *Amru* bore a mortal hatred to *Abdallah*, but the

the latter was too strong and too cunning to be reduced. His mis-
 Notwithstanding that *Amru's* vigilance, and activity, had carriages
 reduced *Abdallah* to the greatest difficulties, and it prevented in govern-
 his bringing an army actually into the field against the ca- ment.
 jiff. *Yezid*, however, being misinformed, and impatient at
 the progress *Abdallah* continued to make, appointed *Walid*,
 the son of *Otha*, governor both of *Medina* and *Mecca*, and
 he began the exercise of his power, by imprisoning three
 hundred of his predecessors dependents and domestics.
 The new governor, however, having but little power in the
 place, found means to release all his friends and followers
 from their imprisonment, and he went at their head to *Da-*
mascus, where he craved an audience of the califf. This was
 granted, and *Amru* found means to justify his conduct to
 the califf's satisfaction. Upon this *Yezid* received a letter
 from *Abdallah Zobeir*, signifying, that if he would send to
Mecca a governor of a more tractable disposition than *Wa-*
lid was, it was possible they might come into a good under-
 standing together. This letter procured the removal of *Wa-*
lid from his government, and *Othman*, who was no way
 qualified for the trust, was substituted in his place. The
 cunning *Arabs* prevailed upon him to send a deputation of
 them, to give *Yezid* a true representation of his affairs in
Arabia. This was done only with a view of inspecting
 more narrowly into the califf's domestic way of life. They
 accordingly found that *Yezid* had a turn to pleasure, that
 he diverted himself with dogs, an animal hated by the *Arabs*;
 that he spent his time in pleasures with women, and in drink-
 ing wine; and that he had a great passion for musical enter-
 tainments; and all this being reported at *Mecca*, and *Me-*
dina, increased the aversion of the inhabitants to *Yezid's* go-
 vernment. *Mondar*, one of the ambassadors, instead of re-
 turning to *Medina*, went to consult *Obeidallah*; and *Yezid*
 hearing of the disadvantageous report the deputies had
 made, ordered *Obeidallah* to confine him. The laws of hos-
 pitality were then sacred amongst the *Arabs*, and *Obeidallah*
 suffered *Mondar* to escape to *Medina*, where he confirmed
 all that had been reported by the other deputies, concerning
 the califf's dissolute manner.

Those reports made such an impression upon the *Arabs*, Rebellion
 that *Naidah*, an inhabitant of *Yaman*, or *Arabia the happy*, against
 put himself at the head of a body of men, who declared him.
 loudly against *Yezid's* government, but without directly re-
 cognizing that of *Abdallah Zobeir*. The state of *Yezid's*
 affairs in that country obliged him, at last, to send *Noorman*,
 the son of *Bashir*, to reclaim them, by representing to them,
 the dreadful consequences of their rebellion. But all was to
 no purpose, for the *Medinians*, who were before divided,
 some of them acknowledging *Abdallah*, and others not dis-
 owning *Yezid*, now united, and chose other two chiefs;
Abdallah the son of *Moti*, being appointed to preside over the

Koreish, and *Abdallah*, the son of *Hantelah*, over the *Ansar*. The latter was one of the most popular men in all Arabia, and having been appointed one of the deputies to *Yezid*, had received from that prince about seventy-five thousand pounds in a present, and each of eight sons whom he carried along with him, received about seven thousand five hundred pounds, besides magnificent habits. But all was ineffectual, to retain either the father or the sons in their allegiance to *Yezid*. They joined with their countrymen, and they not only expelled *Othman*'s lieutenant, but banished the whole family of *Omiab*, who were obliged to take refuge in the house of *Merwan*, the son of *Hakim*, where they were closely blockaded by the rebels.

Yezid
sends an
army, a-
gainst the
rebels.

They found means, however, to send an account of their lamentable condition to *Yezid*, who immediately applied for counsel to *Amru*, his late governor; whom he desired to march with a body of men, to relieve the *Omians*. But *Amru*, with great prudence and politeness, declined the service. *Yezid*, therefore, was obliged to apply to *Moslim*, an ancient officer, to whom he gave the command of twelve thousand horse, and five thousand foot, for the relief of his kinsmen. *Moslim* at first, disdained the command, on account of the cowardice of the family of *Omiab*, who, though so numerous, had suffered themselves to be entrapped in that manner; but the califf's commands being peremptory, a day was appointed for reviewing the troops; and *Yezid* himself, with a sword by his side, and an Arabian bow on his shoulders, assisted at the review. His instructions to *Moslim* were humane and just. He observed to him, that neither *Ali* the son of *Hosein*, nor any of his family, were concerned in the rebellion, and ordered, that if he should fall into *Moslim*'s hands, he should treat him with all imaginable honour and regard; and even, not to proceed to extremities against the city, without summoning it three days successively, to surrender.

who take
Medina.

The *Medinians* hearing of the expedition against them, permitted the family of *Omiab* to depart quietly out of their city, but exacted an oath from them, not to appear in arms on *Yezid*'s side. *Moslim*, in obedience to the califf's orders, sent the *Medinians* three different summonses, on three different days, but all of them were disregarded, and at last he obliged the inhabitants, who made a brave defence, and lost almost all their *Ansars*, to ask to capitulate. This was refused them by *Moslim*; and, forcing his way into the city, notwithstanding his sanctity, he put all the men he found there to the sword, but suffered the soldiers to get one thousand of the women with child, and enjoy the plunder of the city for three days. This being done in direct violation of a passage in the *Koran*, is a fresh proof, that the great men about the califf's court were not so blindly devoted, as they pretended.

pretended to the people, to the extravagancies of *Mahomet*.

This prodigious severity, was, perhaps necessary, for the people of *Medina* had, some time before, formally deposed *Yezid*, by a very singular ceremony. Being convened in a public assembly in a mosque, one of them threw his turban to the ground, with the expression, "I'll lay aside *Yezid*, as I do this turban," another threw his shoe to the ground, saying, "I put *Yezid* away as I do this shoe." In an instant, a large heap of shoes and turbans covered the pavement of the mosque; and after that they expelled all *Yezid's* officers and friends.

It was remarked, that when *Moslim* entered *Medina*, he Hej. 63, sent for *Ali*, the son of *Hosein*, and treated him with particular marks of great distinction; but he obliged all the A.D. 682, males who survived the massacre, to take an oath of allegiance to *Yezid*. All this happened in the sixty-third year of the Hejra; and *Moslim* marched from *Medina*, directly to *Mecca*; intending to treat the *Meccans* in the same manner as he had done the *Medinians*. But being now very aged, he died on his march, and the command of the troops fell upon one *Hosein*, who invested *Mecca*. The place was *Meccabe-* defended by *Abdallah Zobeir* in person, and from the rela- sieged by tion of the *Moslem* authors, it appears pretty plain, that the them. *Mohometans* by this time were greatly improved, in the arts of engineering. For we are told, that *Hosein* was furnished with a machine resembling the catapults of the antients; and that they made such an impression upon the city, that great part of the *Kaba* was beat down, and the rest was burnt, by combustibles thrown from those catapults. In short, *Hosein* was upon the point of carrying the place by storm, when *Abdallah* heard of the death of *Yezid*, which happened forty days after the siege of *Mecca* commenced; *Abdallah*, being certain as to his intelligence, repaired immediately to the walls, and imparted it to *Hosein*, and the besiegers. Imagining it to be a feint of the enemy, they Death of continued the siege; but *Hosein*, soon after, finding the *Yezid*, news to be true, had an interview with *Abdallah*, and offered not only to swear allegiance to him himself, but to bring all the army under his command, amongst whom were many noble *Syrians*, into his interest. *Abdallah* was too cautious to venture to trust him, of which he afterwards repented, and *Hosein* led his troops back to *Syria*, being attended thither by all the *Omiab* family, which is an argument that they were then convinced *Abdallah Zobeir* would succeed to the califat.

The *Moslem* authors were too much attached to the house His cha- of *Ali*, to do justice to the memory of *Yezid*; who, as we racter, have already hinted, seems to have had nothing neither cruel nor barbarous in his disposition. His manners were indeed ill suited to the sobriety of the *Arabs*, for he was ad- dicted

dicted to the pleasures of the table ; he drank wine in public, and loved fine women, both for their persons, and voices. Perhaps even those failings were exaggerated by his enemies, as they found it so much their interest to defame him amongst the *Arabs*. In all other respects, however, he certainly was a brave, generous, and humane prince ; and void of that unfeeling enthusiasm that possessed the califfs before his father's time. His mother, who was an *Arab*, was a fine poetess ; and his father, who was passionately fond of the muses, as we have already seen, he made use of a very uncommon expedient, to render his son *Yezid* their votary. For we are told, that *Moawiyah* sent him, along with his mother, to her relations, who lived in the desarts of *Arabia*, to improve him in poetry ; rightly judging, that scenes of nature, and simplicity of life, were the most conducive to that art. *Yezid* proved a tolerable proficient, but seems to have contracted a hearty contempt for all the fooleries of *Mahomet's* religion ; and this occasioned all the misfortunes of his reign. In his person he was tall and comely. His eyes black. His face pitted with the small pox, and he died in the thirty-ninth year of his age, after reigning about three years and a half. He is, by some writers, accused of avarice, but at the same time they admit, that he was liberal, in many instances ; nor have they given us any proofs of his avarice, excepting that he was not so unbounded in his generosity as his father was. The violation of the two holy cities, *Medina* and *Mecca*, that happened under his reign, were such indelible stains to his memory, that the staunch *Mahometans*, for some time, branded every impious person with the name of *Yezid*. Had he been indulged by providence with a long reign, or had he left behind him an able successor, it is very probable, both the religion and manners of the *Arabs* would have undergone a very considerable alteration. He died at *Hawwarin*, in the territory of *Hems*, and, like his father, he made *Syria* the place of his residence. In his military capacity, he was so far from making a contemptible figure, that it appears he rendered the *Syrians* excellent troops ; and his expedition, in his father's life-time, to *Constantinople*, together with the prodigious acquisitions his general's made, of *Khowarazm*, and *Sarmacand*, considering the shortness of his reign, prove him to have been one of the greatest princes that ever mounted the throne of the califfs.

Moawiyah

M O A W I Y A H II.

YE Z I D, before his death, nominated his son *Moa-* Hej. 64.
wiyah, who was about twenty one years of age, to A.D. 683,
 succeed him. This prince was of a weak constitution, both
 of body and mind; and took a religious turn, under *Omar*. His son
 a favourite tutor, employed in his education. This *Omar* succeeds
 was of the sect called *Kadarians*, who, it seems, maintained him,
 the power which a man has to act by his free will. *Moa-*
wiyah, before he took upon himself the government, con-
 sulted *Omar*, who dissuaded him from it, unless he found
 himself equal to the duties of a sovereign. He made the
 experiment for about six weeks, but found himself too weak
 for the weight of empire, and he assembled the grandees of
 his court, before whom he made his abdication in form.
 They pressed him to name a successor. He said that he had
 been looking out for one, but in vain; and that knowing
 none who was worthy of the trust, he left the choice to
 them. Upon this they proceeded to an election, and their
 choice fell upon *Merwin*, the son of *Hakem*. It appears
 pretty plain, that the brain of this youth was disordered by
 his religious education, for he condemned the conduct both of
 father and grandfather, against the house of *Ali*; and made
 it a point of conscience, to resign the government. The
 house of *Omayyah*, by his abdication, and by *Abdallah Zobeir's*
 success in *Arabia*, found themselves ruined; but attributing
 the pusillanimous conduct of *Moawiyah*, to the education
 he had received, they burned his tutor, *Omar*, alive. As
 to the young califf, who left no issue, immediately upon his
 abdication; he shut himself up from the world, and day- His abdi-
 light, on which account the *Arabs* used to call him the fa- cation,
 ther of the night. The remaining part of his life, which
 did not exceed three months, was spent in religious exer-
 cises, and he died, some say, of a natural death, some, of
 the plague, and some, of poison.

Abdallah, the son of Zobeir.

TH O U G H the Moslem authors have not expressly
 noted it, yet it seems to be past dispute that the *Arabs*, History of
 about this time, considered themselves as the roots of the *Obeidal-*
 califf's power, and that their allegiance to the *Omayyah* fa- lah.
 mily was dissolved by the death of *Ali* and *Hosein*, and the
 constant residence of the three last califfs in *Syria*. *Abdallah*
Zobeir,

Zobeir, continued to assume the dignity of califf, at *Mecca*; but his power was far from being established. *Obeidallah*, who was still governor of *Basra*, and *Cufa*, and who looked upon himself as a branch of the house of *Ommyah*, assembled the people of *Basra*, upon the death of *Yezid*, and acquainted them that he foresaw, the affairs of the califat were running into great confusion; and that they ought to choose for themselves a protector, who was capable to protect them, till the several provinces that formed the califat should agree upon the choice of a master. He expatiated at the same time, upon the great power and dignity of *Basra*, which he said was the most considerable province in all the empire; and he made it his boast, that since the time he first held the government, he put to death about one hundred and forty thousand of their enemies; by which they were now in a state of independency, that left them at liberty to chuse for their protector whom they pleased. In short, he described himself so well, that the *Basrans* could be at no loss to know whom he meant, and immediately offered him the administration of the government; which, after a slight affectation of refusal, he accepted of. But he was not so fortunate with regard to his other government, that of *Cufa*; for after he had sent ambassadors there, in hopes of their imitating the example of the *Basrans*, by choosing him for their protector; they were so far from doing it, that they affronted the messengers in the grossest manner; by throwing upon them dust, and gravel. *Obeidallah*, in the mean while, to make sure of his point, took out of the treasury of *Basra*, about two millions sterling; which he distributed amongst his relations, and those who could be most conducive to his interest. But the repulse he met with at *Cufa* disconcerted all his schemes. Even the *Basrans*, who had before so cordially elected him, now abandoned him, and nothing was so much talked of as the enormous cruelties he had been guilty of. In short, the *Basrans* rose up in arms; and *Obeidallah*, for fear of his life, was obliged to conceal himself in a friend's house, disguised in women's cloaths. It was with difficulty, after all, that he escaped out of *Basra*, with an escort of one hundred men, and his friend *Mesoud*, in whose house he was concealed, lost his life in bestirring himself in his favour. As to *Obeidallah*, in his reduced condition, he was as despicable, as he had been haughty in his prosperity. Being tired with riding on his camel in his flight, he mounted upon the back of an ass, and the people about him, seeing the ridiculous figure he made, upbraided him for the death of *Hosein*. But *Obeidallah* appeared to have no manner of remorse upon that account, though, after his departure, the *Basrans* plundered his house.

from
whence he
is expelled.

In the mean while *Hosein*, whom we left at the siege of *Mecca*, returning with his army, reported to *Merwan* (who was

was at that time looked upon as being at the head of the *Merwan Koreish*) the distracted state of the affairs of the califat; with declares the offer he had made, of recognizing *Abdallah Zobeir*. *Obeidallah*, who had fled to *Merwan*, was present at this consultation, and both of them imagining, that *Abdallah Zobeir* had no thought of assuming the califat, earnestly insisted upon *Merwan* taking upon himself the sovereignty: which with great difficulty he consented to.

But both he and his friends were deceived; for *Abdallah Zobeir*, had refused the allegiance of *Hosein*, only because he distrusted him; and had secured to his interest *Dahak*, who had been chosen, by the people of *Damascus*, their protector, during the vacancy of the califat. *Abdallah* likewise had great hopes from the unsettled state of affairs, at *Basra*; after they had expelled *Obeidallah*, and at last, the *Basrans* agreed to acknowledge his government. But he was too wise to stir from *Mecca*, where he knew his chief strength lay. *Merwan*, all this while, having declared himself califf was proceeding in strengthening his interest, and refused to suffer those who acknowledged him as califf, to repair to *Mecca* for fear of their being debauched into the interest of *Abdallah*.

Thus the califat was claimed by two pretenders, *Merwan*, who was supported by the *Syrians*, and *Abdallah Zobeir*, who was acknowledged by the *Arabs*, particularly those of *Medina* and *Mecca*, at which last place *Abdallah* was inaugurated. His strength was by far the greatest, but he formed the cruel and impolitic resolution, to extinguish the house of *Ommiyah*; either by banishment or death. This exasperated that great family so much, that they recognized *Merwan*. Each califf had a separate general; *Hassan* commanded for *Merwan*, and *Dehak* for *Abdallah*, a great many conferences were held to bring about an accommodation, but to no purpose, and at last both armies came to a decisive battle in the plains of *Damascus*, which ended in the defeat of *Abdallah's* party, and the death of his general *Dehak*. *Merwan* made a very moderate use of his victory, and having entered *Damascus* as a conqueror, he married *Yezid's* widow, and resided in *Moawiyah's*, the first, house; having declared previously *Kalcd* the son of *Yezid* to be his successor. Notwithstanding this *Abdallah Zobeir* still kept his footing in *Arabia*, and was in possession likewise of *Egypt* and *Irak*; but his government of *Hems*, *Noorman*, was expelled out of that city, by the inhabitants, who afterwards cut off his head.

Merwan

Merwan the second califf of the house of Ommyah.

THE cruelty and desire of revenge which *Abdallah Zobeir* discovered, was of infinite prejudice to his affairs. The name of his lieutenant in *Egypt* was *Abdallraman*, and *Merwan* was no sooner recognized at *Damascus*, than he prepared for an expedition into *Egypt*, and made *Amru* the general of his troops. The *Syrians* seem by this time to have been greatly improved in the art of war, for *Abdallraman* was not only defeated, but obliged to resign his government for a sum of money, to *Merwan*, who made his son *Abdalaziz* governor under him, of *Egypt*. But no sooner was *Merwan* returned from his *Egyptian* expedition, than he was attacked by a powerful army, under *Musab* the brother of *Abdallah*. *Musab* however was defeated by *Amru*, *Merwan's* general, and *Merwan* returned triumphantly to *Damascus*. While those civil dissensions were raging, *Salema* the conqueror of *Samarcand*, was by the people of *Korassan*, chosen for their protector; they having refused their allegiance to both the califfs. By this wise step, *Korassan* enjoyed all the sweets of peace, amidst the public commotions which shook the rest of the empire.

The insurrection of the Shiites.

But besides the parties of the two competitors for the califat, a third now arose, which declared equally against both. These were the *Shiites*, or inhabitants of *Cufa*, who pretended now to the deepest remorse, for the treatment they had given to *Ali*, and for their behaviour, in the case of *Hosein*. Finding themselves not rewarded as they expected, by the family of *Ommyah*, they had, soon after *Hosein's* death, employed themselves in amassing vast magazines of arms provisions and money; and they had entered secretly into a confederacy, to revenge the quarrel of the house of *Ali*. They were still considered by others as well as themselves, as being the bravest subjects the califf had; and they were equally rich and powerful. The bulk of the people tho' enthusiastic to the highest degree, were faithless and inconstant; and they never wanted texts of the *Koran*, and traditions of the prophet, to justify their most shameless infidelity. *Nochailah*, a town that lay about a league from *Cufa*, was appointed to be the place of rendezvous, and here they met to choose a leader. The five principal persons amongst them, were *Soliman*, *Mosabbib*, *Abdallah* the son of *Said*, *Abdallah* the son of *Wali*, and *Refaa*. *Mosabbib*, who had been the intimate friend of *Ali*, opened the purport of their meeting, by a most elegant speech, and *Refaa*, proposed *Soliman* for their general of their forces. His nomination was approved of, on account of the great dignity

dignity of *Soliman*, who had been one of the prophet's companions; and then the assembly, which consisted of about one hundred of the most respectable persons of the sect, pitched upon *Abdallah* the son of *Wali*, for treasurer, and who was to receive all the contributions of the party, a circular letter was dispatched by *Soliman* to all their adherents. As this letter is an authentic piece of *Arab* composition, the curious reader, cannot be displeased with a translation of it in this place.

“In the name of the most merciful God. From *Soliman* the son of *Sorad*, to *Saed* the son of *Hodaiphah*, and whosoever is with him of the Muslemans; peace be to you. The present world is a mansion upon which every thing that is good turneth its back, and to which every thing that is bad draweth near, (or turneth his face,) and treateth persons of uprightness ill. The chosen servants of God have resolved to leave it, and to sell the little of the present world that remaineth not, for the great reward that is with God, and shall never fail. The friends of God, your brethren of the sect, of the family of your prophet, have considered with themselves, the tryal they have undergone in the business of the son of the daughter of your prophet, who was called and answered, and called, and was not unanswered; and would have returned but was detained; and asked for security but was hindered, and he let the people alone, but they would not let him alone, but dealt injuriously by him, and killed him, and then spoiled him and stripped him wickedly, despightfully, and foolishly. Nor did they act as in the sight of God, neither had they recourse to God, and they that have done evil, shall know what shall be the end of their actions. Now what your brethren have seriously considered concerning the events of what they were engaged in before is this. They see you have sinned in deceiving the innocent, the good, and in the delivering him up, and the omitting the healing and helping him, A great sin! from which there is no way left for them to escape, nor any repentance, without killing those that killed him, or being killed themselves, and resigning their spirits upon this account. Now therefore your brethren are bestirring themselves in earnest, as well as your enemy, therefore, get together all the assistance you can, and we have fixed a certain time for your brethren to meet us at a place appointed. The time is the new of the moon, of the latter *Rebiyah*, in the sixty-fifth year, and the place where they shall meet us is *Nochailah*. O ye who never cease to be of our sect and our brethren; we are determined to invite you to our business, which God would have your brethren undertake, as they say, and they shew to us, that they repent, and that you are persons duly qualified for the search of excellency, and the laying hold of the reward, and repentance towards your lord from your sin, tho' it be the cutting of your necks, and the killing

ling your children, and the consumption of their wealth, and the destruction of your tribes and families. He (God) hath not hurt the courageous religious men, who were killed, but they are now alive with their lord, sustained as martyrs, they met their lord enduring affliction patiently; they are made account of, and God hath given them the reward of good men—If it please God, persevere patiently in tribulation and affliction, and the day of battle (God have mercy on you) for it is not fit that any of your brethren should persevere in any affliction, in seeking his repentance, but you are worthy and fit to seek the like reward by the same means, neither is it fit that any one should seek the favour of God by any means, tho' it were death itself but you should seek it by the same means. For the best voyage, provision is the fear of God, in this world, and every thing besides shall perish and vanish away. Wherefore let your souls be assured of this, and your desire be fixed upon the mansion of your safety, and the engaging in the holy war against the enemy of your God, and your enemy; and the enemy of the family of your daughter of your prophet, till you come before God with repentance and desire. God preserve both you and us to the happy life, and remove both us and you from hell, and grant it may be our reward to die by the hands of that part of mankind, that is the most odious of all to him, and are his vehement enemies. He is the most powerful over what he pleases, and disposeth of his friends according to his will. Farewell to you”.

They recognize
Mahomet
Ali's
grandson.

This letter produced all that was expected from it, because it procured a favourable answer to *Solyman*, and fresh efforts on the side of the party. All this while, *Abdallah Zobeir* continued to be acknowledged by the other *Arabs* as califf. He was not so obnoxious to the *Shiites*, as *Merwan* was, because he had never publickly approved of *Hasein's* death. He therefore still retained the sovereignty of *Cusa*, and when the *Shiites* were forwarding their preparations, he sent *Ibrahim*, who was of the *Telha* family, to collect the revenues of that city. The conspirators, by this time, had begun a correspondence with *Mahomet*, the grandson of *Ali*, by his wife only, and to him they seemed resolved to transfer their allegiance. *Mahomet* (or as he is called by the *Arabs* *Mahammed*) did not however appear to be extremely fond of embarking himself in so dangerous an enterprize, but reposed his confidence in *Mockab* an *Arab* of great resolution. This person had been formerly suspected of infidelity to the family of *Ali*, but having been extremely active in favour of *Hosein*, had regained their confidence, insomuch that tho' he did not declare openly against *Obeidallah* while he was governor of *Cusa*, yet the latter having discovered his attachment to the *Shiite* party, sent for him, and in a passion beat out one of his eyes, and threw him into prison. He was however released from thence by the clemency of *Yezid*,

but obliged to leave *Cufa* and its dependancies. From this time, he swore most bloody revenge against *Obeidallah*, and all his party. The son of a whore said he to one of his friends, has beat out my eye, but God kill me, if I do not cut him in pieces. This endearing him to *Mahomet*, when he came to *Cufa*, he was received with open arms by the conspirators, and publickly declared, such was his enthusiastic thirst for revenge, that the affairs of *Abdallah Zobeir*, never could prosper till *Mochtar* was at the head of his army to revenge the wrongs of the house of *Ali*. The reader is to observe that after the death of *Hosein*, *Mochtar* had given proofs of his conduct and intrepidity, in the service of *Abdallah Zobeir*, particularly in the defence of *Mecca*; but thinking himself neglected by that califf, he left his court and service, and turned public preacher in favour of the *Shiites*. He prayed in every mosque, and harrangued in every assembly, for that party. But when at *Cufa* he understood that *Solyman* was to command the insurrection, he expressed a great dislike of the choice they had made, tho' he applauded his zeal, and high quality; on account of his having been, one of the companions. He did not however come to any open breach with the rest of the party, upon that account, but *Solyman* looked upon him, as his declared and dangerous rival, and secured his person for some time in close confinement. *Solyman* then proceeded to model his party, but *Abdallah* the son of *Yezid*, who was *Abdallah Zobeir's* governor of *Cufa*; calling the people together, represented to them that the pretext of *Solyman's* party were only calculated to mislead them, and that, if revenging the death of *Hosein* was their real intention, he himself was willing to head them. He added, the real murderer of *Hosein* was the tyrant *Obeidallah*, who had been guilty of the most enormous cruelties amongst them, and that they ought to direct all their resentment against him. This speech was variously received, and the collector *Ibrahim* threatened the people with destruction, if they should rise in arms. Neither of those speeches were pleasing to the assembly. The violent *Shiites*, did not chuse to be conducted by their governor, and they disapproved of *Ibrahim's* pacific motion, which was, in fact, intended only to prevent the people from marching under the governor; who was himself not at all disinclined to the cause of the conspirators. In short, the differences went so high, that death was menaced on both sides, till the governor and the collector came to a better understanding. Their difference however, together with the imprisonment of *Mochtar*, left *Solyman* at liberty to act as he pleased, and he was soon at the head of about four thousand men. But an event which happened at this time served farther to distress the affairs of the califf *Abdallah*.

History of
the fa-
mous
Mochtar.

He is im-
prisoned.

The *Metallexites* or separatists, who had been active in *Othman's* death, had been persecuted at *Cufa*, by *Obeidallah* who

Rebellion
of the
Motalle-

who, in fact, wanted to extirpate them, and they had put themselves under the protection of *Abdallah Zobier*, to whom they performed the most eminent services in his defence of *Mecca*. *Abdallah* however, had an utter aversion both for them, their persons, and their principles; and they discovered it. Upon this assembling in a kind of mutinous body, they came to his house, and without any ceremony, required him to declare what his opinion was of *Othman's* death. *Abdallah*, unable at that very time to punish the mutineers, was obliged to sooth them, by promising in the evening to return them an answer. By this management he gained time to get his guards about him, and then he justified the memory of *Othman*, and condemned his murder. The *Motalaxites* upon this information, called out "God is clear of thee, thou enemy of God", and he pronouncing the same sentence to them, they left *Mecca*, and a body of them went to *Basra*, just at the time the *Basrans* had expelled *Obeidallah* for his cruelty. Here taking advantage of the public distractions, they broke open the prisons, and obliged all the prisoners to serve along with them, but as they were hated by all parties; they were soon after driven out of *Basra*.

Progress
of *Soly-*
man gene-
ral of the
Shiites.

All this while, *Solyman's* army was not numerous enough to take the field with any effect; and he was obliged to dispatch from *Nocharlah*, the place of their encampment two horsemen, whom he ordered to enter into *Cufa* by night and to call out in the streets, vengeance for the death of *Hosein*. This alarmed the people, and procured some increase of *Solyman's* troops, but when the whole were mustered, they did not amount to above four thousand men, tho' upwards of sixteen thousand had engaged to rise. This vast defection was attributed partly to the influence of *Mochtär*, who had found means to be released from prison, and had engaged many of the *Shiites* to serve under him. But the natural inconstancy of the people, was perhaps the chief reason so few appeared in arms under *Solyman*, but they represented to him, that those who absented themselves from so solemn and so pious an engagement were they to join them, would be of very little use to their cause: And that the chosen handful he had, was sufficient to proceed in the great work he had undertaken. *Solyman* was too much of an enthusiast himself, not to be of the same opinion, and when he had imparted his mind to the common men, he found them even outstripping their leaders in zeal and forwardness. Several of his officers, who were men of the highest quality, had abandoned their wives and families, whom they tenderly loved, to perform the acts of self devotion, for it was no other, that fitted them to proceed upon this expedition. The common people called out to be led against their enemies, and had abandoned all thoughts in this world in hopes of a better, and the whole army assumed to themselves the title of penitents, to express their sorrow for the death of *Hosein*,
their

Their proceeding in their undertaking, being thus irrevocably resolved upon, the only question now was, whether they ought to proceed against *Obeidallah* who was then in *Syria*; or return to *Cufa* to massacre all who were there who had been accessory to *Hosein's* death. The former opinion prevailed, for *Solyman* observed that many had been intimidated, by the power and threats of *Obeidallah*, who was the real murderer of *Hosein*; and therefore it would be unjust to begin their expedition by a massacre in their own country, in which a great many of their own innocent friends and relations might fall. Upon the whole therefore it was determined, in all events, to proceed against *Obeidallah*, and orders were given accordingly. When this resolution was published at *Cufa*, it was so popular there, on account of *Obeidallah's* cruelties, that *Abdallah* the governor, and *Ibrahim* the collector, being now reconciled to each other, proposed to raise an army, and to join *Solyman*. Their intention went so far that they went to *Solyman's* camp, and communicated the same to him, but informed him, that not being yet in readiness; it was absolutely necessary for him to suspend his march for some time, till they could assist him with men and money. They likewise informed him, that having certain intelligence of *Obeidallah's* being at the head of an army against them, there was not the least doubt but that he would advance against *Cufa*, in which case every inhabitant of the province would declare against him, so excessively was he hated there. *Solyman* continued inflexible in his former resolutions, nor could he be prevailed upon even to delay his march, till *Ibrahim* could return to *Cufa*, that he might furnish him with a sum of money; his constant answer being, that their going out, was not for this world.

Solyman and his penitents, had a great dependance upon Extravagant penitents, who had promised to join them, from *Basra*, and *Madayen*; but in this they were disappointed, and that, together with the news that *Obeidallah* at the head of a great the *Shi*-army began to cool the resolution of all the penitents, who *ites*. were not the most desperate of enthusiasts; nor did *Solyman* chuse to have any other under him. For having appointed a general review of his troops, upon the banks of the *Euphrates*, he found that one thousand of them had deserted, but this was so far from daunting him, that he called it a good ridance, and concluded with saying, the lord has held them back for the better, wherefore praise ye the lord. Next morning, the penitents advanced to *Hosein's* tomb or burying place, where, notwithstanding the haste they were in, they stayed for a day and a night, imploring his pardon and bedewing his grave with tears. The public prayers were said by *Solyman* himself, and the *Arab* authors tell us, that they wept exceedingly. The expressions he made use of on this occasion, tho' full of frantic enthusiasm, have something

in them extremely affecting, when we consider the occasion, on which they were used. When the public devotions were over, *Solyman* gave the word to march, but not one of them would stir without standing solemnly over the tomb of their martyr, again with tears imploring his pardon.

Being now advanced as far as a town called *Kayyarah* in their march to *Syria*, they were overtaken, with a dispatch from *Abdallah* the governor of *Cufa*, apprising them afresh of the dangers they were to encounter, and of the numbers of their enemies, and advising them by all means to return before they met with certain destruction, his letter concluding, “God turn your cares towards his obedience, and your backs to the rebelling against him”. *Solyman* read this letter in public, and tho’ *Abdallah* had therein professed himself ready to join them, if they took his advice, yet *Solyman* explained the letter to his followers, as meant according to the interest of the califf *Aballah Zoheir*, whose creature the governor was; he added, that they were never likely to be nearer the two *Hoseins*, meaning *Hasan* and *Hosein*, than they then were, and that if they died in their present state of penitence they were sure of going to heaven. His speech was highly approved of by all the army, and tho’ they were not then above three thousand strong, they proceeded undauntedly in their march, declaring that their intention was to depose both the reigning califfs, and to re-instate the family of their prophet in their dominions. At the same time *Solyman* wrote a very civil answer to the governor of *Cufa*, but declined his invitation, adding, that as his followers were now true penitents, they were determined to proceed in their march, and to leave the event to God. But having marched as far as a place called *Ras Aia* they were met by *Obeidallah* at the head of twenty thousand horse, and by him surrounded and cut to pieces.

who are
defeated.

Death of
the califf
Merwan.

It was about this time that the califf *Merwan* died, but the manner of his death is variously recounted. Notwithstanding his marrying the widow of *Yezid*, and so’lemnly engaging the succession to *Kaled*, *Yezid*’s son, yet he afterwards set him aside, and declared his own son *Abdalmalec* his successor. *Kaled* had spirit enough to upraid *Merwan* with this perfidy in the most reproachful terms, in the height of all his grandeur; which provoked the old man to call him bastard; and *Kaled* immediately acquainted his mother with all that had passed, not forgetting the epithet that was so reproachful to them both. As the marriage between her and *Merwan* was probably no other, than a match of convenience and interest, she repented what had passed by poisoning, or, as some say, by smothering her husband in the seventy first year of his life, after a reign of about ten months, if we date it no farther back than his last inauguration at *Damascus*.

Merwan

Merwan in his person, like almost all the other *Arabs*, was His cha- tall, thin, and swarthy; his eyes grey, and his hair yellow- racter, ish or red. Tho' the *Arab* authors, are far from being lavish of their encomiums upon him, yet if we consider the disadvantages under which he lay before he came to the government, he must have been a very extraordinary man. His father *Al Hakim* had been driven into exile, by the prophet himself, for divulging a certain secret, and had continued in banishment, during the two first califats, but was recalled by *Othman*, who thereby exposed himself to great censure, and indeed it was one of the charges against him that brought on his death. Considering this disadvantage of parentage, and the many great men whom *Merwan* had to oppose, it required very uncommon talents in him, to succeed; and to put himself at the head of the house of *Ommiyah*. We cannot here help reminding our readers, that his success is a fresh proof, that the family of *Abu Sofian*, were never in their own hearts satisfied with *Mahomet* and his family taking upon themselves the temporal government of *Mecca*, and *Arabia*; and we can easily perceive, notwithstanding the silence of the Moslem authors, on account of their veneration for the posterity of the prophet, that this was the true source of all the disputes about the califat.

Abdolmalec the son of Merwan.

AB D O L M A L E C is generally looked upon as being the first califf of the house of *Ommiyah*, because it was by interest that his father first came to the throne. He was inaugurated the very day of his father's death, and we are told that when he heard of it, he folded up the *Koran*. and said I must take leave of thee now. Others relate, that during the ceremony of his inauguration, he held forth that book open, to every person who swore allegiance to him, saying, let this determine between us; be this as it will, it is certain, that religion still continued to be, if not the ruling principle, the ruling pretext amongst the *Arabs*, and *Abdolmalec* was too wise to disregard even the absurdities of his. He is succeeded by *Abdolmalec*.

The performing devotions in the *Kaaba* at *Mecca*, continued to be a favourite practice with the Mahometans, but *Abdallah Zobier* being in possession of that city, *Abdolmalec* thought it dangerous to suffer his subjects to repair thither. But as *Jerusalem* was held by *Abdolmalec's* subjects in the highest degree of veneration, he enlarged the temple there, so as to take into it the steps, on which *Omar* had prayed; that his subjects might repair there instead of *Mecca*, to perform who orders his subjects to worship at *Jerusalem*.

form their devotions. He likewise applied to the Christians at *Damascus*, to be put in possession of one of their churches, that he might convert it into a mosque. But they produced to him the instrument of capitulation that had been signed by their conqueror *Kaled*, and *Abu Obeidah*, and upon their declaring their resolution to abide by those terms, *Abdolmalec* desisted from his request.

Successes
of *Mochtar*.

Upon the defeat, and utter extinction, of the *Shiites* under *Solyman*, *Mochtar* was recognized by the remainder of that sect, who continued to be still very powerful, as their head. He had procured, for this purpose, a commission from *Mohdi*, the son of *Mahomet*, the son of *Ali*; the lineal and lawful successor of the impostor, whom the *Arabs* intitled, the true Iman. *Ibrahim* would have willingly disputed with him the superiority of command on this occasion, but he was silenced by *Mochtar*'s producing his commission. We cannot help observing here, that it is not improbable, the family of *Ali*, at this time, did not aspire to any other character, but that of the True Iman, and confined the exercise of their power to acts of devotion. For we are told, by authors of good credit, that after he was joined by *Ibrahim*, he was solemnly inaugurated califf, upon his swearing to govern according to the *Koran*, and the traditions of the prophet, and to extirminate the murderers of *Hosein*. Notwithstanding this, we cannot fairly suppose him to have been any other than a kind of a deputy under *Mahomet* and his son; from whom it is plain he derived his authority over the *Shiites*; but whether he acted as califf, or only as general, he began the exercise of his power, by putting to death *Shamer*, *Kawla*, *Amer*, and all others who had been active in the tragedy of *Hosein*.

He puts
to death
Hosein's
murderers

The dominions of the califat were at this time involved every where in bloody wars. *Abdolmalec* had raised an army against *Abdallah Zobeir*. He likewise ordered a body of troops to advance against the *Shiites* on one side of *Cufa*, while *Abdallah* ordered his brother *Musab*, then governor of *Basra*, to attack him on the other side, so that whatever difference might be between the two califfs, they agreed in the destruction of *Mochtar* and the *Shiites*. *Mochtar* knowing that *Abdallah* was not so obnoxious as *Abdolmalec* was, to the *Shiites*, applied to him, but in a very deceitful manner, for a reconciliation, and offered to march to his assistance at the head of his forces. *Abdallah* gave him a civil answer, but declined trusting him, till he had formally recognized his authority, and had obliged his followers to do the same. When that was performed, he promised *Mochtar* that he had nothing to fear from him. He informed him, however, that the army, which *Abdolmalec* had ordered to advance against *Cufa*, and *Irak*, was posted at *Dilkora*, and that he was resolved to send a body of men to dislodge him.

His de-
ceitful
conduct.

Upon

Upon this *Mochtar* ordered *Serjabil*, one of the officers under him, to set out with about three thousand men, two thousand three hundred of whom were slaves, the rest *Arabs*, and to advance towards *Medina*, where he was to expect farther orders. This expedition of *Serjabil*, which, in reality, was intended against both *Medina* and *Mecca*, carried with it a face, which *Mochtar* was in hopes would impose upon *Abdallah*; as *Serjabil's* orders might have been to have joined the army which was to have marched against the *Syrian* califf's troops at *Dilkora*. *Abdallah*, however was not to be surpris'd in that manner, and thence a body of two thousand men, under *Abbas*, marched into *Medina*, with orders to treat *Serjabil* and his army as enemies, if he refused to march with him to *Dilkora*. In the mean while *Serjabil's* men had undergone inexpressible hardship's in their march through some of the most barren tracts in the world, and being unprovided with magazines of any kind, they were ready to perish with hunger and thirst. When *Abdallah's* party came up to them, *Abbas* demanded of *Serjabil*, whether he acknowledged himself to be subject to *Abdallah*. *Serjabil* did not disown that he was, upon which *Abbas* peremptorily required him to march his men along with him, against the *Syrians* at *Dilkora*. *Serjabil* replied, that his order from *Mochtar* was to march to *Medina*. *Abbas* observed at this time that *Serjabil's* men were drawn up in order of battle, notwithstanding the visible distress they were under for provisions; and very prudently dissembled his real sentiments upon *Serjabil's* reply. The better to gain his end, he made a present to *Serjabil* and his men of some sheep he had along with him, which diffused such a joy amongst them, that they broke their ranks, and dispersed themselves about the country in search of bread, and conveniencies for dressing their provision. *Abbas* perceiving this, advanced at the head of his detachment, and attacked *Serjabil*, who had scarce an hundred men with him, in his camp; he killed him, and about seventy others. After this, *Abbas* ordered a flag of quarter to be erected, which the bulk of *Serjabil's* men readily embraced; but about three hundred of them, *Arabs* we may suppose, refusing quarter, were cut in pieces.

His troops
defeated.

Mahomet, the son of *Ali*, and his family, at this time resided at *Mecca*, but though they behaved not only inoffensively, but dutifully, to *Abdallah's* government, they made it a point of conscience to refuse taking an oath of allegiance to it. They, however, appear to have kept up a correspondence with *Mochtar*, which very probably was winked at by *Abdallah*, the better to discover their secrets. It appears likewise, that many of the *Cufans*, in *Mahomet's* interest, were then residing at *Mecca*. Upon the miscarriage of *Serjabil's* expedition, *Mochtar* wrote a consolatory, and encouraging letter, to *Mahomet*, promising to repair the loss by

Peaceful
disposi-
tion of
Mahomet.

marching to his assistance, at the head of a powerful army. *Mahomet*, who, as we have observed before, seems then to have taken himself entirely to the duties of an *Iman*, or high priest, declined accepting of this offer; put no trust, as he said, in the arm of flesh; and exhorted *Mochtar* to fear God, and to abstain from bloodshed.

who is,
with his
family
and
friends,
condemn-
ed to
death;

This negociation came to *Abdallah*'s ears, and though he had nothing to fear from any efforts of *Mahomet*, yet he knew that if he could once receive his oath of allegiance, *Mochtar*'s authority must dwindle away. He therefore peremptorily required *Mahomet* and his family to recognize his authority, and, upon their declining it, he shut them up in a prison, near the well *Zemzem*, which, according to the tradition of the *Arabs*, was the spring which God miraculously produced for the refreshment of *Hagar*, and *Ishmael*, when *Abraham* turned them out of his house. *Abdallah* at the same time imprisoned seventy *Cufans*, who resided at *Mecca*, and adhered to *Mahomet*; and gave him and all his family and friends to understand, that if they did not, by a certain day, which he named, swear allegiance to his government, he would order every one of them to be put to death, and their bodies to be burnt to ashes.

but is de-
livered.

Notwithstanding this severity, the constancy of the prisoners did not abandon them, and they found means to send *Mochtar* intelligence of their distress. He read the letter in public; he then addressed himself to the people, and told them, that though the holy family was thus pent up, like sheep destined to slaughter, yet that he would send to their relief, horse after horse, like wave succeeding wave. He soon explained what he meant by this emphatical metaphor. He ordered *Idali*, one of his best officers, to take under his command seven hundred and fifty choice horse, and to divide them into six squadrons, each following the other, at a certain distance, to *Mecca*. *Idali* performed this critical service with prodigious spirit and success, and he himself arrived at *Mecca*, at the head of the first division, which was composed of about an hundred and fifty, just two days before that which was to decide the fate of *Mahomet* and his family, and while the piles of combustibles were amassing to reduce their bodies to ashes. The first thing they did was to march to *Zemzem*, where they cut in pieces the guard, notwithstanding the sanctity of the place, for it lies within the precinct of the *Kaaba*, and delivered the holy family from their imprisonment. But, by this time, *Abdallah* came to the *Kaaba* in person, and *Idali* was about to attack him and his guards, when he was prevented by *Mahomet*'s express commands, because he would not suffer that sacred place to be defiled by fighting. *Abdallah*, seeing what a despicable handful his enemies were, threatened them all with death; but, before he could put his menaces in execution, another, and another troop appeared, till at last

last the whole 750 coming up, *Abdallah* found himself surrounded, and overpowered, and was, in his turn, a prisoner. *Idali* and his officers then prepared to cut off *Abdallah's* head, but they were prevented by *Mahomet*, who upon this occasion distributed a large sum of money, which had been brought him by the last division of his deliverers, amongst four thousand of the friends of his family. This appears to have been done with a view of engaging them as a body guard to himself, for after restoring peace to *Mecca*, and compromising matters between *Abdallah* and *Idali*, we are informed he retired to a mountain near that city, where he fortified himself with four thousand of his followers.

Mochtar was now at leisure to pursue his designs; and he began with preparing for an expedition against *Obeidallah*, which he knew was the most popular one he could undertake. Upon this occasion, we are told, that he ordered to be prepared a kind of a throne, which was carried about wherever his army marched, upon a mule's back; and he told his men, that it would be to them of the same use, that the ark was of to the children of *Israel*. He even had a short form of prayer composed, which was said before this ark, to which the people answered, Amen. This pageantry had the desired effect, by inspiring the enthusiastic *Arabs* with an opinion that they were invincible. But, in fact, it seems to have been a preparative expedient, devised by *Mochtar*, to impress them with a notion of his own sanctity; for we are told by some of the best authorities, that about this time he affected to be a prophet. It is certain that *Ibrahim*, the son of *Ashtar*, whom *Mochtar* appointed to be his general in this expedition, carried this idolatrous tribunal with him, to the very spot where he expected to engage *Obeidallah*; whose soldiers seem to have been disheartened by its appearance, and the confidence which it communicated to the *Shiites*. For we are informed, that though *Obeidallah* was at the head of seventy thousand men, and was himself one of the bravest, and one of the most experienced generals of his time, yet he would not venture to give *Ibrahim* battle upon equal terms, but kept himself in his camp, which was stormed by *Ibrahim*; and *Obeidallah*, with upwards of ten thousand of his soldiers, were either put to the sword, or perished in a neighbouring river, while they were endeavouring to fly, and that *Ibrahim* lost no more than three hundred and seventy men. Such is the force of superstition and prepossession amongst a deluded, and uninformed people. This victory on the part of *Mochtar* was so complete, that it was followed by the immediate submission of *Nisibis*, *Sinjar*, and *Dara*. But the *Arab* authors sensibly observe, that *Mochtar*, in all his proceedings, had no good design. In fact, it appears he made a most cruel use of his victory, and, under pre-

Enthusi-
astic con-
duct of
Mochtar.

His suc-
cess, and
defeat of
Ibrahim.

tence of revenging *Hosein's* death, he destroyed a vast number of the *Cufans*.

but is himself defeated, and killed
 This, in the end, proved his destruction, for *Abdallah Zobeir* appointed his brother *Musab*, a man of great courage and abilities, to be governor of *Basra*; and he had no sooner taken possession of his new government, and harranged the people, than one *Shobet* rode into *Basra*, upon a cropt-ear'd, bob-tail'd mule, with his cloaths rent, and called out in *Arabic*, help, help. It is probable that this incident had been previously concerted between *Shebet* and *Musab*, who no sooner heard of the matter, but pronounced that the person who made the outcry must be *Shebet*, and ordered him to be immediately brought before him. *Shebet* accordingly appeared, attended with a great number of *Cufans*, who joined him in imploring *Musab's* protection against the cruelties exercised in *Cufa*, by *Mochtar*. *Musab* was by no means averse to this proposal, and wrote to *Mohalleb*, who governed the interior parts of *Persia*, to march to his assistance; *Mohalleb*, after some deliberation, agreed to this, and brought to *Musab* a fine army, with a large supply of money, which enabled him to take the field against *Mochtar*. A general battle ensued, in which *Mochtar's* army was entirely routed, and he himself, with about seven thousand men, retired to the citadel of *Cufa*. *Musab*, immediately invested the place, and notwithstanding the brave defence made by *Mochtar*, took it, and put *Mochtar* with the whole garison to the sword, on account of the enormous cruelties they had been guilty of.

This great event happened in the sixty-seventh year of the *Hejra*, and the *Arab* authors give a prodigious character of *Mochtar*, whom they term, the scourge of the enemies of the house of *Ali*. We have not, however, upon the face of history sufficient grounds for believing all the great things that have been transmitted of him, to be true. It is therefore reasonable to believe that the accounts of many of his actions and exploits have not come to our hands. But even from what appears, he must have been a person of extraordinary resolution and intrepidity, by having, with a handful of enthusiasts under his command, defeated *Obeidallah*, and resisted so long the power of both the reigning califfs. One circumstance, however, appears more than any other to have contributed to his fame, for he happened to be the father of a race of heroes, who have rendered his name immortal amongst his countrymen. Upon his death, which happened in the sixty-seventh year of his age, his general *Ibrahim*, took the oath of fidelity to *Abdallah Zobeir*, who became immediately master, not only of *Cufa* and its dependencies, but of all *Armenia*, *Mesopotamia*, and other provinces, over whom he appointed proper governors.

But no sooner did this great event happen, than another set of The *Azarakites*, called, from their leader, *Azarakites*, started up. They were of a very extraordinary constitution, for they declared themselves professed enemies to all established government, either in church or state; and to have a particular antipathy to the house of *Ommiyah*. They issued, like so many savages, out of the interior parts of *Persia*, and it is probable that the backwardness which *Mohalleb* discovered to join *Musab*, was owing to his apprehensions of them. At first they over-run all *Irak*, as far as *Madayen*, and every foot of their progress was marked by some enormous act of cruelty. Women with child were ript open, and no age nor sex was spared. One of them, less savage than the rest, shewing some inclination to spare a lady of incomparable beauty, who had fallen into their hands, one of his companions upbraided him, as being an enemy to God, and immediately smote off her head. *Mohalleb*, *Musab*'s lieutenant in *Armenia*, and *Mesopotamia*, after the expedition against *Mochtar* was over, assembled a body of troops at *Basora*, and came up with them at *Shawlak*, where, for the space of eight months, scarce a day passed without an engagement between the two armies. During this time *Azarak* died, and *Musab* being displeased with the conduct of his lieutenant *Mohalleb*, substituted *Omar* in his place. This new general was so successful, that he defeated the *Azarakites*, with great slaughter, in several engagements; but not till after they had done incredible damage in all the countries, through which they passed, having, after their being defeated several times, renewed their inroads as far as *Madayen*. Their great progress.

During this war, many great revolutions happened in the Syrian califat. *Abdolmalec* still pretended to be the rightful calif, and would suffer no competitor; but the vast successes of *Musab*, his rival's brother, began now to alarm him, and he resolved to bring matters to a decisive event, but he found himself under prodigious difficulties. A most dreadful famine prevailed then all over *Syria*, and the weather continued so uncommonly rainy, that he lost a whole campaign; and, after several fruitless encampments, found himself obliged to return to *Damascus*. *Amru* was, at this time, governor of that city; he was nearly related to *Abdolmalec*, and had been appointed to his government by *Merwin*, with a kind of an injunction to his son *Abdolmalec*, to continue him in the same after his death. *Abdolmalec*, upon his return to *Damascus*, finished his preparations for renewing his expedition against *Musab*, and was taking leave of *Amru*, when the latter desired the calif to confirm to him his government after his death, in case he should fall in his expedition to *Irak*. *Abdolmalec* very properly thought, that such a perpetuity of power might prove detrimental in his family, and gave him a flat refusal.

refusal. It is observed by historians, that both the califf and the governor were brought up in their infancy under an old woman, who was of so perverse a disposition, that her greatest pleasure was in showing great partiality, first to the one, and then to the other, by turns, till at last they contracted a rooted aversion to each other, which subsisted to the end of their lives. We may, therefore, fairly suppose, that *Abdallah's* preferment, under *Abdolmalec*, was entirely owing to the authority of old *Merwan*, and that the califf was glad of an opportunity to ruin him, which soon presented itself.

Rebellion
and death
of *Amru*.

For *Abdolmalec* had no sooner left *Damascus*, than *Amru* declared himself governor of it, independent of the califf, which obliged the latter to abandon, at that time, all thoughts of his expedition against *Musab*, and to lead his troops back to *Damascus*. Here a bloody civil war was likely to ensue; till the women of the city rushing between the two parties, represented that their differences must terminate in the advancement of the *Koreish*, that is of *Abdallah Zobeir* to the califat. Their remonstrances were so pathetic and essential, that both the califf, and the governor, were brought into terms of accommodation; to which both of them agreed.

But, this tranquility was of no long duration, *Amru* was weak enough to think that no prince can, from his heart, pardon an attempt against his authority; and, no doubt, he greatly trusted to his power within the city. Some days after the accommodation was compleated, he was invited, or ordered, by the califf, to attend him. It was in vain for *Amru's* wife to attempt to dissuade her husband from obeying so suspicious a summons. All the precautions he could be persuaded to take, was to carry along with him an hundred of his guards, and to put on a shirt of mail, and his sword. When he came to the palace he entered it, attended by his page, but the gates were immediately shut upon his other attendants. He was introduced to *Abdolmalec*, who, after ordering a slave to take off his sword, placed him by himself on a couch; and, pulling from under the cushion of his own chair a set of fetters, he said, he had made an oath to iron *Amru*, as soon as he was in his power; and now was his time to perform it, which his slaves accordingly did. The califf then pushed his unmanly resentment so far, as to knock out two of *Amru's* teeth, and the califf, taking one of them up, said, that he had now put it out of his power to pardon him; since he was sure that *Amru*, after receiving such an injury, never could forgive him. *Abdolmalec* then ordered him to be beheaded, but was obliged to leave the execution to the care of *Abdolaziz*, his brother; because the evening prayers commanded himself away. *Abdolaziz* not choosing to perform such a butcherly office upon so near a relation, *Abdolmalec* found *Amru* alive when

when he returned from his devotions, and endeavoured to kill him with his own hand. But finding he was armed with a shirt of mail, under his cloaths, he commanded his slaves to throw him upon his back; and then he ran him through. In all this scene of murder, it appears, that *Abdolmalec* behaved like a thorough coward; and we are told, that when he committed it, he was seized with such a trembling that his slaves were obliged to lay him upon a couch. His terrors, no doubt, were increased, by an attempt which was made by *John*, *Amru's* brother, to rescue him. For suspecting by his brother's long absence, how matters went, he got together a party of about a thousand friends, domestics, and slaves; and after killing several of the califf's guards, they forced their way into the palace, killing and wounding all that opposed them. But *Amru's* head being thrown out of the window, with some money at the same time, they soon, for obvious reasons, desisted, like true barbarians, from their attempt, and suffered, *John*, their leader to be taken prisoner, and condemned to lose his head.

The cruelty of the califf, however, seems to have been whose no way agreeable to his friends, nor could he bring them brother is over to consent to *John's* execution, and that of some other pardoned. of his friends and relations. They advised him rather generously to dismiss them; that if they should afterwards fall into his hands, fighting against him, he would have a justifiable reason for putting them to death. Upon this, they were released, and they went and joined the califf, *Abdallah*, at *Mecca*. *Abdolmalec* was so sensible of his perfidious proceeding in all this affair, that he sent and demanded of *Amru's* widow the articles of capitulation between him and her husband, But she nobly ordered the messenger to tell *Abdolmalec*, that she had wrapt them up with her husband in his winding-sheet, that they might enable him to plead his cause with God, against the califf.

The dissoltary manner in which the *Greek*, as well as the *Arab*, historians of this time write, renders it impossible to ascertain to every year of the *Hejra*, its particular transactions; and, undoubtedly many very important events happened in the period we are now describing. For we are certain that, in the seventieth year of the *Hejra*, there was in the califat a bloody war, between *Abdolmalec* on the one side, and *Abdallah Zobeir*, and his brother *Musab*, on the other, which encouraged the *Greeks* to make a vigorous irruption into the *Syrian* califf's territories. *Abdolmalec*, finding himself unable to fight so many powerful enemies at once, agreed to buy his peace with the *Greeks*, by paying them a tribute of about seven hundred pounds a week, though the *Greek* historians make the sum much larger, and say it amounted to a thousand dinars a day, besides a tribute of three hundred and sixty-five slaves, and the same number

Hej. 70.

A. D. 689

War between the califf's.

number of true *Arab*-bred horses. But the last circumstance renders the other parts of the relation suspicious, because *Abdallah* was at that time in possession of all the country where those fine horses are produced. It is not at all, however, unlikely, that the *Greeks* might have obliged *Abdallah*, at the same time, to pay a tribute of the same kind, he having the same reason that *Abdolmalec* had for submitting to such a demand.

Defeat and death of Musab. The *Syrian* califf whose territories were more contiguous, and his strength more complete, than those of his competitor, was now at leisure to undertake an expedition against *Abdallah Zobeir*, and being immensely rich, he sent one *Kaled* to form a party for him amongst the *Basrans*, whom *Musab* still governed. We are told that *Musab*, some time before this, had carried to *Mecca* an immense quantity of wealth, both in money and effects, which he distributed amongst the *Arabs*. This, no doubt, encouraged *Abdolmalec* in his scheme of getting over the *Basrans*, and he seems to have succeeded in it. For though *Musab* was informed of *Kaled*'s arrival, he could not get him into his power; which exasperated him so much, that, calling together the chief *Basrans*, he reproached them so severely, and to render them still more averse to his interest, *Abdolmalec*, at the same time, sent a letter to *Ibrahim*, the son of *Ashtar*, which that faithful *Arab*, or rather *Irakian*, delivered, sealed as it was, into the hands of *Musab*, who, breaking it open, perceived that it contained an offer from the *Syrian* califf, to *Ibrahim*, of the government of *Irak*, if he would declare for him. *Ibrahim* then giving *Musab* the strongest assurances of his fidelity, he advised him to proceed in the most severe manner against the *Irakians* in *Abdolmalec*'s interest. But *Musab*, for several reasons, rejected that advice; which he and his brother had afterwards cause to repent of, and continued his preparations to resist *Abdolmalec*.

In the mean while, the *Syrians*, especially those of *Damascus*, were in the utmost consternation, at *Abdolmalec*'s declaring, that he would, in person, lead his army into *Irak*; nor could all the representations of the dreadful consequences which must happen to *Syria*, if he was defeated, divert him from his purpose. The truth is, he had brought over the greatest part of *Musab*'s generals; and the leading men of *Irak*. He made no secret of this, and proceeded in person upon his expedition.

Musab, who was an excellent general, became, but too late, sensible what a perfidious race the *Irakians* were. He however assembled his troops, and marched to a place called *Marskin*, lying between the famous city *Tadmor*, or *Palmyra*, and the town of *Tayba*, where *Abdolmalec* soon arrived, at the head of his army. A battle being inevitable, *Abdolmalec* appeared very anxious to inform himself concerning some of the great *Irakians*, and finding that those whom he

most

most doubted, or dreaded, were not along with *Musab*, he assured both himself and officers of success; well knowing the disposition of most of those who were in *Musab's* army.

Ibrahim, *Musab's* faithful friend, began the attack so furiously, that he drove *Mahomet*, the son of *Aaron*, *Abdolmalec's* general on the opposite wing, from his ground, with great slaughter; but fresh troops, with the califf at their head, coming to *Mahomet's* assistance, *Ibrahim* was attacked in his turn, defeated, and killed. This, his death, was a fatal blow to *Musab*, who had scarce a friend remaining among all his officers. The principal *Irakians* either joined *Abdolmalec*, or laid down their arms, or refused to fight. *Musab* perceiving this, called out in great anguish of spirit, O *Ibrahim*, *Ibrahim*! but I have no *Ibrahim* to day; then addressing himself to his son, who was a stripling of sixteen, or seventeen years of age, he desired him to make the best of his way, with a party of horse, to *Mecca*, and inform his uncle *Ibrahim* of the *Irakian's* perfidy. But the generous youth declared he would not abandon his father, in such extremity, and offered to attend him if he would retire to *Basra*, from whence he might go to *Mecca*, where he might join his brother. *Musab's* spirit could not suffer him to submit to fly, upon any terms. He said it never should be mentioned amongst the *Koreish*, that he had entered the sacred temple of *Mecca* as a fugitive. *Abdolmalec*, who had formerly a personal friendship for *Musab*, informed of the generous behaviour of him and his son, offered him quarter, and both of them were killed, fighting by one Magnan another's sides, after having destroyed many of the *Syrians*. mity of an
From what has fallen from the *Arab* authors, it appears, *Arab*, however, as if *Musab* had been killed by one of his own men.

It appears, both from the *Greek* and *Arab* historians, that *Abdolmalec*, before he set out upon this expedition, had taken his measures so well, that he had nothing to fear, but from *Musab*, and the few faithful adherents he had. For, having gained the battle of *Marskin*, *Cufa* opened her gates to the conqueror, and all *Irak*, both *Babylonian* and *Persian*, submitted to his sway. After he entered *Cufa*, he enquired after *Amru's* brother, *John*, who had joined *Musab*. But the soldiery refused to produce him, unless he would previously assure them of his safety; which *Abdolmalec*, though nettled, consented to. *John* being brought before him, "Wretch," said *Abdolmalec*, after renouncing thy allegiance to me, with what face canst thou appear before God?" *John* answered, "With that very face he has given me;" and then took a fresh oath of allegiance to the califf.

Abdolmalec, was now on the high tide of prosperity. Before he left *Damascus*, he had extinguished all the remains of *Amru's* faction, and he had now nothing to fear, but

Reply of
John to
Abdolmalec.

from *Abdallah Zobeir*, who still continued at *Mecca*. He therefore gave a loose to joy, and not only, contrary to his natural parsimony, distributed large sums of money amongst the *Irakians*, but ordered a magnificent entertainment to be given to all the inhabitants of *Cufa*, at which he himself presided. Amongst other guests was an old *Makzumite*, who was particularly caressed by the califf. He asked him what was his favourite dish, he answered, "An afs's head, highly seasoned, and well roasted." "What do you say," replies the califf, "to a shoulder, or a leg, of a sucking lamb, covered with butter and milk?" This incident is not too mean to be recorded, because, as Mr. Ockly has very justly observed, it proves the cookery of the *Arabs* was the same then as in the days of *Abraham*.

Abdolmalec's wit and poetry.

By this and some other passages related on the same occasion by the best *Arab* authors, *Abdolmalec* appears to have been a man of great affability and wit. He was of a family distinguished for their poetical talents, than which, nothing could endear them more to the people of the East; particularly the *Persians*, and the *Arabs*, when he was at the height of his entertainment, he broke out in verse into the following beautiful exclamation,

Were a shadow but lasting, how sweet were our lives!

Remarkable observations

After supper, he desired to be instructed by the old *Makzumite* concerning the antiquities of the castle of *Cufa*, and the information he received, occasioned his breaking out into another poetical rapture, upon the frail state of sublunary things, which, under all the disadvantages of a translation, is very just and affecting. Being returned from viewing the castle he threw himself upon his sofa, and was proceeding in his poetical ejaculations, when the head of *Musab* was brought before him. Upon viewing it he ordered the bearer to be paid one thousand dinars, but he refused to take a farthing, because he said I killed him out of a private resentment I had against him, and not on the califf's account. Upon this, one of the company made the following remarkable observation, I saw said he, in this very castle, the head of *Hoscin* presented to *Obeidallah*, I saw *Obeidallah's* presented to *Mochtar*, I saw *Mochtar's* presented to *Musab*, and now I see *Musab's* presented to you. This speech touched the califf so sensibly, that he ordered the castle to be instantly demolished, not so much perhaps for any faith he had in omens, as that he was willing to take an opportunity of taking from a perfidious, treacherous, and inconstant people, their strong hold.

Victory of the *Azarakites*.

The next step taken by *Abdolmalec* was to reduce *Mawfel*, which was governed by *Mohalleb*, for *Musab*. *Mohalleb* was at this time at war with the *Azarakites* in that neighbourhood who were enemies equally to both califfs. But when he and his army understood that *Musab* was defeated and dead, they very readily took the oath of allegiance to *Abdolmalec*, for which they

they were severely reproached by the *Azarakites*. The first use *Abdolmalec* made of it was to appoint *Kaled* the son of *Abdallah* to be governor of *Basra*, who appointed *Mohalleb*, a most excellent general, to a civil employment, that of treasurer of *Basra*, and the command of *Mohalleb's* army was given to *Abdalaziz*, *Kaled's* brother. This ill judged alteration of the command gave such spirits to the *Azarakites*, that they advanced against *Abdalaziz*, routed his army, put himself to flight, and took his wife prisoner. While the captors were debating among themselves concerning the value of the lady's ransom, which was proposed to be fixed at one hundred thousand dinars, one of the chief amongst them, swore she should not escape so, and instantly struck off her head, to prevent, as he said, any farther dispute amongst his brethren. When *Abdolmalec* was informed by *Kaled* of this defeat, he sent a very sharp letter to *Kaled*, for sending his brother to command against the *Azarakites*, and for keeping by his side in the quality of a tax-gather, so compleat a general as *Mohalleb*, who he emphatically termed the son and grandson of war. He ordered him at the same time to restore *Mohalleb* to his command, and to do nothing without his advice; promising that his brother *Basbar* whom he made governor of *Cufa*, should join him with five thousand *Cufans*, in his march to *Ehwaz* against the *Azarakites*, which he accordingly did, and the whole army encamped at *Ehwaz*, the head city of a territory of that name, and situated upon a navigable river, the *Diopropolis* of the *Greeks*, and the *Ormuz* of the *Persians*. It appears that the *Syrian* generals had an absolute contempt for the *Azarakites*, for one of them being reprehended by *Mohalleb*, for not intrenching the division, his reply was, that he minded the enemy no more than he did a camels fart. The reader we hope will excuse the homeliness of this expression, which is here inserted from the *Arab* authors, only to give him the stronger idea of those extraordinary people. *Mohalleb* who knew better, checked the officer for his contempt of the enemy, and assured both him and the other generals, that they were about to encounter the lions of *Arabia*. Observing that some ships were lying in the river, his advice was, that it would be greatly for the califf's service to seize them; but the enemy, before that could be effected, had the precaution to burn them. He then gave orders, that the camp should be strongly intrenched, and both armies lay, inactive, and in sight of one another, for twenty days. It is probable that by the expiration of that time, the *Azarakites* were greatly distressed for want of provisions. For the califf's generals then attacked them, and the *Azarakites* after making a most desperate resistance, were put to flight. *David* one of the califf's general officers was sent to pursue them with a body of horse, and by the califf's express orders was reinforced by *Basbar* with a fresh body of five thousand men; but the whole of *David's* detachment

Mohalleb's
 success
 against
 them.

tachment returned to *Ehwaz*, from the pursuit in a most miserable condition, almost all of them having lost their horses returned on foot, tho' the rebels seemed at that time to have been dispersed.

History
and death
of *Abdallah*
Zobier
and his
mother.

So many unforeseen difficulties, had hitherto prevented the califf *Abdolmalec* from advancing in his main expedition against *Abdallah Zobier*, who still remained master of *Mecca*, and both the *Arabias*, when the news of *Musab's* defeat came to *Abdallah*. He then assembled the people, and in a manly, but pious and pathetic speech, he informed them of what had happened. He exhorted them to behave bravely, "and by God added he, we will not die on our beds, but pushing our lances; and fighting under the shadow of swords. As for this world it only diverts us from joining the king of kings, and whose dominions shall not perish, nor his kingdom pass away. Should the present world smile upon me, I shall not regard it with immoderate joy; nor shall I bewail its frowns with indecent sorrow, what I had to say I have said; and now I beg pardon of God, both for myself and you". Notwithstanding this pathetic speech, the vast success that *Abdolmalec* had, struck such consternation into *Abdallah's* followers, that many of them deserted him; but all who remained, resolved to stand by him to the last, and they made the most effectual dispositions for defending *Mecca*.

Abdolmalec, about this time, prepared to return to *Syria*, where his presence was wanted, and he gave the command of his army to *Hejaye*. He was a man who inherited the virtues and abilities, as well as eloquence of the *Arabs*, during the three first califats; but at the same time, he possessed their vices, for he was not only severe, but cruel. We are told, that one motive which prevailed with *Abdolmalec* to give him the command of this army, was, that *Hejaye*, pretended that he had a dream in which he thought he had taken and slain *Abdallah Zobier*. The reader is to observe that we mention those fabulous incidents, not on account of their veracity, but of the policy of inventing and adapting them, because undoubtedly whether they were true or false, they had next to the effect of oracles, on a superstitious and an ill-informed people.

Abdallah had the precaution to take possession of all the defiles that led to *Mecca*, but his troops were beat from them all; and *Hejaye* at last formed the siege of that city, after receiving a strong reinforcement from *Abdolmalec*. He took possession of mount *Arafat*, and thereby the Mahometans of both parties were deprived of their pilgrimages to *Mecca*. Those under *Abdallah* could not perform theirs, because their enemies were in possession of that sacred mount, nor could those under *Hejaye*, perform theirs, because *Abdallah* was possessed of the sacred temple. The siege of *Mecca* however continued with great fury for eight months and seventeen day

days, during which time the *Syrian* califf's troops, especially when they attacked the quarter of the holy temple, were so intimidated by violent storms of thunder and lightning, that they were upon the point of abandoning the siege, but were still encouraged by *Hajaye*, to continue it, partly by his own heroical conduct, and partly by the several religious delusions he invented to assure them of success. It must not be forgotten here, that when *Hajaye* entered the territories of *Arabia* or *Hajaye* (for so both *Arabias* are termed) he made a proclamation in *Abdulmalec*'s name, assuring all the *Arabs* who remained quiet, of the califf's protection. This undoubtedly was one of the reasons why the garrison of *Mecca* under *Abdallah* was unable to make head against *Hajaye*, who told his troops that the storms of thunder and lightning they met with were not more prejudicial to them than to their enemies. Not only ten thousand of the inhabitants of *Mecca*, but *Abdallah*'s two sons by this time had gone over to *Hejaye* and made terms for themselves. Upon this *Abdallah*, who was himself at this time about seventy two years of age, repaired to his mother who was about ninety, to take her advice how he should proceed, whether he should take the very tempting offers made to him by *Hejaye*, or fight it out to the last. Her answer was, "that if he knew himself to be in the right he ought to persevere in it to the last drop of his blood; and not to become a scoff and scorn to the boys of the *Ommiyah* family, but, added she, if thou choicest the present world, alas! bad servant thou hast destroyed thyself, and those who have fallen with thee in thy cause. To plead that thou hast deserted the cause of truth, because thy friends have deserted thee, is the part neither of a brave nor a religious man. How long hast thou to live? death is now eligible. Upon this *Abdallah* kissed his mother's hand, saying, by God these are the sentiments in which I have persevered to this very day, and in which I will dye. Therefore O mother look upon me henceforth as a dead man: nor let your grief be immoderate, but resign yourself to God's command, for your son hath not stood in the footsteps of the scandalous, nor done any thing worthy of reproach; nor prevaricated in the judgement of God, nor dealt treacherously in giving his faith: nor supported himself by doing injury to any person that delivered up himself or entered into covenant; nor did any injustice, done by my officers, ever reach me that I approved of, but always discouraged it, nor was there any thing that I preferred to the doing the will of my lord. O God, thou knowest that I do not say this for the justification of myself but to comfort my mother that she may receive consolation after my death."

An affecting scene between them.

This act of self devotion was well supported by the devotee. *Abdallah*'s mother encouraged him by all means to try the issue. His answer was, "God give thee a good reward O mother! you will not cease praying for me both before

and after." She answered "that I never shall, others are killed in vain, but thou for the truth. O God! be merciful to him for his watchfulness in the long nights, and his diligence and his piety towards his father and me; O God I resign myself to what thou shalt command concerning him; I am pleased with what thou dost decree; give me in *Abdallah* the reward of those that are grateful and persevering". After this affecting scene was over, *Abdallah* for ten days made a manly and noble defence. But finding that he could hold out no longer, he came to take leave of his mother, and told her that he was now arrived at the last day of his life, while he embraced her, she felt that he had upon him a shirt of mail, which she counselled him by all means to lay aside as he was resolved to die. He was weak enough to express some concern about what might happen to his body after his death, and she bravely told him, that a sheep when it was once killed, was not sensible of being flayed. She then gave him a draught strongly impregnated withm usk, which has a stupifying quality, and rendered him insensible of danger; and took a most tender leave of him. He then went out and after performing prodigies of valour, in killing a vast number of his assailants, he repeated an *Arabian* verse, implying, that his blood did not fall upon his heels, but upon his feet; meaning that he did not fly from his enemies, soon after he was killed, upon which *Hejaye* fell down and worshipped. His head was cut off, but the musk he had drank perfumed his body, which hung for some time exposed in the air. His enemies, and *Abdolmalec* himself did justice to his valour and constancy.

Abdolmalec
sole califf.

By the death of *Abdallah*, *Abdolmalec* became sole califf. *Abdallah's* virtues were long remembered amongst the *Arabs*, but not to mention his predominant vice, which was that of avarice; the *Arabs*, especially the great men amongst them, had no idea of money but for the purposes of ambition, and therefore a man who loved to hoard up money amongst them, was looked upon as a kind of a prodigy, and this gave rise to a common saying with them, that in the time of *Abdallah Zobier*, no man was ever known to be brave without being generous.

The reduction of *Abdallah Zobier* was attended with the most advantageous consequences to *Abdolmalec*. His generals repulsed the *Greeks*, who began to presume too much upon the opposition he met with, and had invaded part of the califat, but those transactions are very obscurely transmitted by the Moslem, as well as the *Greek* authors. All the particulars we learn are, that *Mahomet* the son of *Merwan* lost an army of one hundred thousand men, which, as governor of *Armenia* and *Mesopotamia*, he sent against his enemies. But soon after he attacked them with a body of forty thousand choice troops, drove them into their temples and reduced them to ashes. Many other transactions of the same kind happened

happened about the same time, but in fact, the names of places are so much confounded and mistaken by Moslem authors, that it is impossible to be particular; It appears however in the main, that upon the death of *Abdallah Zobier* the dominions of the califat were greatly extended.

Hejaye to whom the califf *Abdolmalec* seems to have committed an unlimited authority, treated the inhabitants of *Hejaye Mecca* with vast severity. He even stigmatized them upon appointed several parts of the body, to render them infamous; and ruled over both *Mocca* and *Medina* in the most despotic manner. This conduct rendered his government so unpopular that the *Azarakites* again began to stir, upon which *Abdolmalec*, made *Hejaye* governor of *Irak*, *Chorasan*, and *Sigistan*, *Basbar*, *Abdolmalec*'s brother, being then dead. He signaled the beginnings of his new government with acts of the utmost cruelty. He affected a prodigious regard for the memory of *Othman*; and to be the avenger of his death; but at last, his enormous cruelties exasperated the people of *Cufa* so much, that they rebelled, and a pitched battle was fought, in which *Hejaye* was victorious. But in the meanwhile the *Azarakites* continuing still restless, *Hejaye* ordered his cruel a general, *Abdalraman*, to attack them; but joined *Mohalleb* with him in the command. At first they obtained many advantages over the *Azarakites*; but *Abdalraman*, disdain-
ing *Mohalleb*'s advice, was surprised by the *Azarakites*; and both himself and his army were cut in pieces.

Notwithstanding those vast successes of *Abdolmalec*, he was far from being quiet upon his throne. It was plain that it might be seized by any fortunate enthusiast, who, by his hypocrisy could delude the people into an opinion of his sanctity. Two men of that character, *Shaleh*, and *Shebib*, conspired against him, and he gave *Hejaye* orders to secure them; but *Shaleh*, by the force of hypocrisy, grounded his interest so well at *Cufa*, that he remained secure there, while *Shebib* was making preparations for an insurrection in other quarters. All the forces, however, that they could raise, did not amount to above one hundred and twenty men; but they were enthusiasts, and therefore terrible: They advanced to *Dara*, in *Mesopotamia*, where *Mahomet*, the son of *Merwan* was governor; and *Shaleh* was there declared califf. *Mahomet*, despising their numbers, ordered one of his officers, *Adi*, to march against them with five hundred men. *Adi*, very properly remonstrated to him, that five hundred men, were no match for one hundred and twenty enthusiasts, and declined the command; upon which he was ordered another five hundred. But, even with this vast superiority of numbers, he was very unwilling to engage the rebels. He sent a messenger to *Shaleh*, to inform him, that if he pleased to invade any other province, he should meet with no opposition from
him.

him. *Shaleh*'s answer was, "That if *Mahomet* was in the measures of the tyrants," meaning *Abdolmalec*, and his governors, "he must encounter him;" and, without any more to do, he attacked *Adi*, while he was saying the noon prayers, and put him to the route, and made himself master of his camp. Upon this shameful defeat, *Mahomet* gave the command of three thousand men, in separate bodies, to two officers, named *Kaled* and *Hareth*, with an intimation, that whoever came up first with the rebels, should command the other. This occasioned them to make such expedition, that they kept equal pace, and the rebels were attacked by both at once. It is observed by the *Moslem* authors themselves, that one of the rebels could beat ten, nay, twenty, of the califf's troops, and the event justified that opinion. For, the rebels having cut in pieces the califf's horse, obliged his generals to fight on foot, and made it a drawn battle. But *Shaleh*, after the battle was over, consulting *Shebib* they thought proper to retreat, which they did, first to *Manfile*, and from thence to *Defcarah*, where they were attacked by a body of five thousand men, sent against them by *Mahomet*, under *Hareth Alharidani*, all of them the finest troops in the empire. The rebels were by this time reduced to the number of ninety, but they behaved with incredible spirit. For, though *Shaleh* was killed upon the spot, *Shebib* made a masterly retreat to a neighbouring castle, from whence, in the night time, he made a sally, and defeated *Hareth*'s troops.

Great reputation of the latter.

So surprising a victory gained *Shebib* such reputation, that he was soon joined by greater numbers, and defeated the califf's forces in several subsequent battles; and, at last, even made himself master of *Cufa*. *Hejaye* was then obliged to apply to *Abdolmalec* himself for a reinforcement, which was sent him, and a new battle ensued, in which *Shebib* was defeated; and his brother, and his wife, who it seems fought along with him, were both of them killed, and *Shebib* was obliged to abandon *Cufa*. He was pursued into *Kerman* by *Sofian*, one of *Abdolmalec*'s generals, who, notwithstanding his vast superiority of numbers, was several times defeated by *Shebib*, but he himself, at last, was overcome, and drowned in a river, which discharges itself into the bay of *Basra*. He was in every respect a most extraordinary man; his mother is said to have been a Christian, but, out of love to his father, she embraced Mahometanism; and, we are told by the *Moslem* authors, several extravagant stories, both of his birth and death. He was succeeded, as head of the *Azarakites*, by one *Katri*, who was defeated by the califf's troops, and, with the loss of four thousand men, was obliged to take shelter in *Taboristan*, who gave him and his followers a generous reception. They, however, made him a most ungrateful return, for in a short time they commanded him either to profess

They retire to *Taboristan*.

profess

profess Mahometanism, or to pay them a yearly tribute ; and, upon his refusal, they drove him into the califf's dominions. The name of this prince was *Asbid* ; he implored the califf's protection, and received it ; for, notwithstanding their difference in religion, he furnished *Asbid* with a body of troops, with whom he re-entered his own dominions, and defeated and killed *Katri*. The reader is to observe, that, according to the most probable accounts, the kingdom *Taberistan*, is no other than the *Hircana* of the antients ; and is a mountainous tract of ground, celebrated for the wild beasts it contains. About this time, *Mahomet*, *Death of Ali's grandson*, but not by the daughter of the prophet, *Mohomet*. died. By all accounts, he was the son of one of *Ali's* wives, by a former marriage. He appears to have been a quiet and inoffensive man, and many of the *Moslems* themselves acknowledged him to be the true Iman, or successor of *Mahomet*. Hej. 76. A.D. 695.

We are now arrived at the seventy-sixth year of the Hejra, State of and it is not only difficult, but perhaps impossible, to give the arts, the reader any satisfactory account of the progress which and pow- learning and civil policy had then made in the vast em- er, and pire of the califat. Astronomy, from the farthest date of time, had been a favourite study of the *Arabs*. The mildness of their climate, and the clearness of their air, gave them many advantages in observing the motions of the heavens ; and every house they had was a kind of an observatory, for the roofs being flat, they consulted the motions of the cælestial bodies, while they lay in bed, which generally was upon the roof of the house. They seemed likewise, to have had a particular cast for the study of medicine ; and some of their authors are, even in *Europe*, now celebrated for that knowledge. Their talent in poetry has been more than once mentioned, in the course of this work, nor is it too bold to say, that every *Arab* was a poet ; the genius of their language not permitting them to be otherwise. This, perhaps, was the only art which the enthusiastic madness and ambition of the times which we are treating of, did not injure ; for there seems to have been a long interruption of all other knowledge. The califfs of policy of the house of *Ommiyah*, however, appear by no means to the cali- have been enemies to the liberal arts and sciences. They fat. particularly improved architecture ; for, about this time many of the mean edifices, that had been erected by *Mahomet*, the impostor, and the first califfs, were pulled down ; and others, more grand and superb, were erected in their stead. But their taste did not keep pace with their magnificence ; and they were the authors of what is, very improperly, termed the *Gothic* architecture, in *Europe*. It does The ca- not even appear, that, before this year, they had even liffs coin turned their thoughts towards a coinage ; which in all other money, constitutions is considered as being of the utmost importance

tance and conveniency. The truth is, the rapidity of their conquests furnished the califfs with more money than they had occasion for; nor did their frugal manners, and abstemious way of life, give them leave to spend the money they acquired. The *Greek* mint furnished them with dinars, and their dirhems were of *Persian* coinage. The late troubles of the califat, and the tribute which the califf had agreed to pay to the *Greek* emperor, had inspired the latter with some opinion of superiority, and he insisted upon the califf's omitting in his letters, the high encomiums which, by the form of them, were bestowed upon *Mahomet*; threatening, that if he did not, he would order a coinage of money, which should mention *Mahomet*, upon its coins, in a very unfavourable manner. This silly and unpolitic menace, provoked *Abdolmalec* so, as to think of setting up a mint of his own, which he accordingly did, about the year 691. The coinage, at first, was very rude, and the money contained only certain *Arab* texts, and sayings, from the *Koran*: but afterwards it improved, both in the fineness of the metal, and the elegance of the workmanship.

Breach
between
Abdolma-
lec and
the *Greek*
emperor.

The court of *Constantinople* looked upon this new *Arabian* coinage as an intrusion upon their prerogative, and not only refused to receive their tribute in that money, but declared war against *Abdolmalec*. *Justinian* II. was then emperor of *Greece*, and *Abdolmalec* gave the command of his army to one *Mahomet*. This general, in his march, ordered the treaty of subsidy between the califf and the *Greek*, to be carried before him upon the point of a spear, and he engaged the enemy in the neighbourhood of *Sebastapolis*. At first he was beat, but he afterwards found means to gain over from the emperor's service twenty thousand *Sclavi*, by which he was enabled to defeat the *Greeks* with great slaughter; and he even continued, for some time, master of all *Armenia*. According to the *Greek* authors, a quiver full of dinars, of gold coins, was the bribe, which brought over the general of the *Sclavi* to join the *Arabs*. After *Mahomet* became victorious, he, in his turn, was guilty of great cruelties over the *Greek* provinces. Other commotions, about this time, happened in different parts of the califat, particularly in *Korasan*, which, we are told, were attended with great slaughter of the *Arabs*; but we are made acquainted, by their authors, of few or no particulars.

Progress
of the
war.

The war between the califf and the *Greek* emperor continued till the seventy-seventh year of the *Hejra*, when *Alid*, one of *Abdolmalec*'s generals, invaded the *Greek* territories, and carried off a vast number of prisoners. About the same time, we are told, that *Sergius*, a patrician, rebelled against the *Greek* emperor, and betrayed *Bazica*, and *Barnucium*, to the *Mahometans*. In the seventy-eighth year of the *Hejra* the *Arabs* made themselves masters of all the territory belonging to the antient *Carthage*, but were soon expelled by one
John,

John, a *Greek* partrician, a general of great courage, and experience, in war. The Moslems, however, repaired their losses, and again invaded *Afric*, with a vast fleet. *John* was obliged to abandon that country, and to embark, with his troops, for *Constantinople*. But, we are told, that about this time a rebellion brok out in *Persia*, under one *Abdalraman*, an *Arab*, who expelled the califf's governor there, but was supported by *Mahomet*, who defeated *Abdalraman*, and reinstated their former governor, who is termed the *Kakhau*, in the government of *Persia*. The particulars of this rebellion are extremely curious. *Hejaye*, who still continued in great power and credit under *Abdolmalec*, grew jealous of this *Abdalrahman*, and ordered him to march against the *Kakhau*, but with so unequal a force, that *Abdalrahman* plainly saw, that he and his troops were destined to destruction. He acquainted his army of this, and they immediately swore vengeance against *Hejaye*, and allegiance to *Abdalrahman*. Upon this *Abdalrahman* clapt up a peace with *Zentil*, for so the *Kakhau* was called, and attacked *Hejaye*, whom he overthrew, and then made himself master of *Basra*; and after that of *Cufa*. In the mean while *Hejaye*, being reinforced by the califf, who still continued to support him, notwithstanding the enormous cruelties he had been guilty of in his government, was again defeated by *Abdalrahman*, who was now at the head of an hundred thousand men. But *Hejaye* being continually supplied with reinforcements, by the califf, at last defeated *Abdalraman*, who was obliged to have recourse to his ally *Zentil*, who, we are told, assisted him with an army of sixty thousand men. Our *Arab* authors are not at all clear with regard to this *Zentil*. Sometimes he is called a *Kakhan*, sometimes the governor of *Persia*, under the califf; and sometimes the king of the *Turks*. It is possible he might have been all these; for the *Turks*, about this time, began to make a figure in *Asia*; and the califf, might find it very convenient to take their princes, and leading men into his service. Be this as it will, *Zentil* was defeated by *Hejaye*, and *Abdalrahman* was killed.

Rebellion
in *Persia*.

Supprest
by *Hejaye*.

In the eighty-third year of the *Hejra*, *Waset* was built by *Hejaye*, upon the river *Tygris*, at an equal distance, between *Cufa*, *Basra*, *Bagdat*, and *Abwas*; whereby it obtained its name, which in the *Arab* language signifies, the middle. This is almost the only clearly ascertained fact which we know, of this time; for the Moslem authors are extremely undetermined as to the dates of other particulars; though many of importance happened. *Heradius*, a *Greek* general, invaded *Syria* as far as *Samosata*, and we are told, destroyed no fewer than two hundred thousand *Arabs*, and marched to *Capadocia*, loaded with immense plunder. On the other hand, we are told, that the *Arabs*, under one *Abdallah*, made an irruption into the *Greek* empire, and laid

The
Arabs in-
vade the
siege

Greek em- siege to *Antaradus* ; but miscarried in their attempt. The
Pire. *Armenians*, likewise, drove the *Arabs* out of their country,
 which was soon after recovered by *Mahomet*, one of the
 califf's generals, who burnt alive all the *Armenians* who had
 been principally concerned in the revolt. After this, the
 califf's troops invaded *Cilicia*, and laid siege to *Sisium*,
 which they took and destroyed. But, soon after this, they
 were encountered by *Heraclius*, an imperial general, who
 totally defeated them, and cut twelve thousand of them in
 pieces. The *Arabs*, upon this occasion, were commanded
 by one *Azib*. Nothing of note happened after this during
 the life-time of *Abdolmalec*, who died just as tranquility
 began to be restored to his government. The disease
 which proved mortal to him appears to have been a dropsy,
 because he was tortured, at the time of his death, with ex-
 treme thirst, but was prohibited all kinds of liquors by his
 physicians. While he was in the agony of his distemper, he
 called to his daughter *Fatima* for liquor ; but she was pre-
 vented from giving him any, for a while, by his son *Walid*,
 whom he threatened to disinherit. At last *Fatima*, unable
 to see the torture he endured, gave him the liquor he asked
 for, which he no sooner drank than he expired, in the
 twenty-second year of his reign, and about the sixtieth of his
 life.

but are
defeated.

Death

and cha-
racter of
*Abdolma-
lec.*

Abdolmalec was of a middle stature, a large beard and
 belly, and a gaping mouth. As to his intellectual qualities,
 avarice is said to have been his predominant vice. But,
 during the course of his reign, he seems to have known so
 well how to lay out his money, that his greatest successes
 were owing to his liberality. His covetousness, therefore,
 was not so much of the retentive, as of the rapacious, kind,
 which procured him, from his subjects, the denomination
 of, the sweat of a stone. In all other respects he was a man
 of great capacity, learning, and politeness. None of his
 subjects exceeded him in wisdom and acuteness ; but in his
 person he was unamiable, and it is said, that the stench of
 his breath killed flies. It is greatly to be lamented, that
 both the *Arab* and *Greek* authors have been so careless in
 transmitting to us the particulars of *Abdolmalec*'s history ;
 but in fact, when we consider the vast variety of the ope-
 rations that filled his reign, it would have been almost im-
 possible to have transmitted them all. He conquered great
 part of *India*, and we are told, tho' the particulars are not
 mentioned, that he carried his arms into *Spain* ; but his
 great good fortune was, in having been enabled to annex to
 to the califat its antient and original patrimony, the go-
 vernment of the two *Arabias* ; so that he is said to have been
 more powerful than all his predecessors. His death hap-
 pened in the eighty sixth year of the *Hejra*. Doctor *Ockley*,
 in finishing his history, has employed several pages in giv-
 ing some memoirs of *Hejaye*, who seems to have been *Ab-
 dolmalec*'s favourite, and first minister. But the particulars
 transmitted

transmitted of him, consists of a few pieces of low humour, that sometimes softened his natural ferocity and cruelty, without any thing else to recommend the perusal of them to an understanding reader.

AL WALID.

THE Syrian califfs went as far as they durst, in discouraging the veneration which their subjects had for Mecca; and the scenes of their prophet's life. *Al Walid*, the son and successor of *Abdolmalec*, like his father, ordered his subjects to go in pilgrimage to *Jerusalem*, where he adorned and enlarged the mosque that had been built by *Omar*; and made other conveniencies for the pilgrims. His brother *Moslim* commanded the troops against the imperialists, whom he invaded, and defeated, carrying off great numbers of prisoners; and it appears, by coins that are still extant, that he improved the coinage which had been begun by his father.

But the invincible attachment which the *Mahometans* had to *Arabia*, obliged *Walid* to give some attention to the places of worship there. He rebuilt, in a most magnificent manner, a temple over the spot where *Mahomet* lay interred; and he took into it the adjacent houses, which had been allotted by the prophet to his wives. These, it seems, were very low and mean, and it gave vast offence to many zealous *Mahometans* to see them demolished; because, while they stood, they appeared as so many monuments of the prophet's modesty and frugality. About the same time, *Walid* treated with the Christians at *Damascus*, about converting the noble church of *St. John* the baptist, into a mosque. But the Christians again produced the original capitulation, which had been signed by *Kaled* and *Abuobeidab*; nor could they, though the califf offered them forty thousand dinars, be persuaded to give up their church. *Walid* therefore seized it by force, and we are told, that he employed twelve thousand men, during all the rest of his reign, in erecting a most magnificent mosque at *Damascus*.

Walid, on the side of *India*, improved the conquests that had been begun by his predecessors, and which had been interrupted by the *Turks* and *Tartars*. His general *Kaliba* passed the river *Ihoun*, the *Oxus* of the antients, and, after surmounting prodigious difficulties and dangers, gave them a total overthrow. After that, he besieged and took *Bokhara*, the capital of *Bokharia*, and reduced *Samarcand* itself, which had revolted from the califf, together with *Sogdiana*, *Bagrafa*, *Shash*, *Fargena*, and *Mawaralnahr*, all which, of themselves, formed an immense empire. He likewise

He is succeeded by *Walid*.

who enlarges the mosques of the califfat,

and subdues India.

likewise rendered the khan of *Khovrazm* tributary to the califf, obliging him to pay annually, according to the Moslem authors, no less than two millions of dinars. It appears that those countries were inhabited by idolators, for we are told, that *Katiba* destroyed the idols wherever he met with them, and built a mosque in the capital, *Khovrazm*, where he said prayers every *Friday*. He likewise carried off all the golden nails, to a prodigious value, which fixed the idols to the places where they stood.

But *Waled's* arms were carried much farther, by *Mahomet Thakifi*, another of his generals, who, we are told, subdued the greatest part of *India*, and penetrated as far as *Makran*, where he killed king *Dahu*, and cut off his head. His great But, in fact, little dependence is to be had with regard to conquests. those matters and conquests, on account of the inaccuracy of the Mahometan historians, and many places they mentioned are not known, or known only by their names. In this we receive but little light from Christian writers. We are told, however, by *Theophanes*, that about the beginning of this califat, two *Arab* generals, *Moslim*, and *Abbas*, broke into *Capadocia*, where they besieged *Tyana*. They were opposed by an imperial army under *Theodorus*, and *Thophilactus*; but being composed of undisciplined troops, they were routed by the *Arabs*, with vast slaughter, and lost their camp. *Tyana*, however, made a very brave defence, and the Moslems were so much distressed for provisions, that they were upon the point of abandoning the siege, when the place agreed to capitulate. The *Arabs*, however, were perfidious enough to violate the articles of capitulation, by sending great numbers of the *Tyanians* into slavery; and banishing them into desolated countries. After this, *Abbas* made a fresh irruption into the imperial territories, and carried off with him vast numbers of prisoners, who were all of them reduced to a state of slavery. In like manner, *Othman*, another of *Walid's* generals, over-ran the greatest part of *Cilicia*, and reduced many cities of that fine country, but his conquests seem not to have been permanent, for we find them soon after in the hands of the imperialists.

The his- It is in this califat that we have the first account of the in-
tory of vasion of *Spain* by the *Arabs*. This invasion appears to
the con- have been originally projected by *Musa*, the califf's gene-
quest of ral in *Africa*, who was solicited by count *Julian*, whose
Spain by daughter had been ravished by *Roderic* the king of *Spain*.
the *Arabs* Two sons of *Virtiza*, *Roderic's* predecessor, likewise, joined
the invaders. *Walid*, being informed, by *Musa*, of this
invitation, was so far from being fond of it, that he ordered *Musa* to be upon his guard. *Musa*, however, put one of his officers, *Tarif*, at the head of four hundred foot, and one hundred horse, and he, crossing the streights of *Gibraltar*, guided by *Julian*, and the other two princes, landed in *Spain*, where, being joined by many of *Julian's* friends,

friends, they made a vast progress, and carried off a prodigious deal of plunder; particularly, a famous table, composed of precious stones, and said to have been the richest in the world. So encouraging a beginning, determined *Musa* to push the undertaking, and we are told, that soon after, he assembled a numerous fleet of transports, on board of which he put twelve thousand men, whom he carried over to *Spain*. They found *Tarif* entrenched upon the famous calpe, which, from his name, was called, *Gebel Tarif*, and now *Gibraltar*; and, having made himself master of all the neighbouring country, he besieged and took *Seville*, which was at that time little better than an open place. This was followed by the reduction of all the antient *Bætica*, and the greatest part of *Lusitania*. The *Goths*, who had conquered *Spain*, attempted to oppose the *Arabs*, and the *Africans*, that composed the army of *Musa*, and *Tarif*, but they were defeated with great slaughter. *Roderic*, however, we are told, assembled a fresh army, with which he charged his enemies, at *Asidona*, so bravely, that victory stood in suspense between them for eight days; but, being betrayed by his generals, he was at last defeated, nor was it ever known what became of his body. It must be acknowledged, that the history of this conquest of *Spain* by the *Arabs*, or, as they were afterwards called, the *Saracens*, is full of many romantic improbable incidents, as delivered by the *Christians*. All that we know for certain, is, that *Spain* was at that time, the richest country in *Europe*, but was obliged to receive the *Arabs* for its masters. As to count *Julian*, though his provocation, by all histories, was very great, yet the *Arabs* themselves seemed not to have thought, that they justified his betraying his country to their invasion, if what their own historians say is true. For it is said, that they threw him into irons, where he miserably expired. That his son was thrown from the top of the castle of *Centa*, and thereby killed; and that his wife was stoned to death. We cannot however help observing, that the relations of the Moslem authors upon this head are extremely inconsistent with their general practice, because we do not find in the whole of their annals the smallest repugnancy to employ the most execrable and infamous methods to gratify their own ambition, and passion for power. If *Julian*, therefore, suffered from them, it is highly improbable that it was for any other crime, than that of having felt a remorse for having introduced them into his native country. The *Arabs*, according to their own accounts, lost sixteen thousand men in the battle of *Asidona*; but, in about thirteen months after, they made themselves masters of the greatest part of *Spain*; but they employed several years before they could entirely subdue it. But the history of this conquest will fall more properly in, when we come to treat of the affairs of *Spain*. The truth is, that

Count
Julian
Put to

the

the califat became now to be too unwieldy for the government of one man; and, though *Al Walid* was respected as its head, yet *Musa*, and the governors of distant provinces, conducted themselves as if they were independent on him; so that, properly speaking, the history of the conquest of *Spain*, during this period, does not properly fall in under that of the califat.

The califf's vast riches, expences, and magnificence. Upon the whole, however, *Walid* was, perhaps, the most powerful, as well as magnificent, prince, that had ever sat upon the throne of the califfs. The mosque which he built at *Damascus*, was the most sumptuous Mahometan building that ever was erected, and is said to have cost upwards of three millions, five hundred thousand pounds, sterling. This sum, great as it was, will not appear incredible, when we consider the prodigious opulence, and extent of the califf's dominions; greater, perhaps, than any prince, or people, till then, had ever been possessed of. The *Romans* were strangers to the trade of the *Indies*; which the *Arabs* seem to have cultivated, by the coasts of *Africa*, and by being masters of all the *Persian* gulf. The riches of his empire, therefore, must have been inconceivable; especially if, to other considerations, we add, that he was the absolute master of all those countries, that literally form the paradise of the earth. As a proof of his immense revenues, we are told, that all the lamps that were lighted up in the mosque at *Damascus*, to the number of six hundred, were of gold, and suspended by golden chains, which made so dazzling an appearance, that they disturbed the devotions of the Moslem votaries; and one of *Walid's* successors was obliged to remove them, and substitute chains, and lamps, of iron, in their place.

His preparations to invade Greece.

Notwithstanding the immensity of *Walid's* power and riches, the *Greek* empire was still an eye-sore to him; and the thoughts of so noble a conquest as that of *Constantinople*, towards the latter end of his reign, engrossed his whole attention. *Justinian* was then, in all probability, emperor of the *Greeks*, for he reigned till the year of Christ 710; but *Leo Isaurus* seems to have been the emperor who fought so nobly against the *Arabs*. The latter part of *Walid's* reign was entirely employed in preparations for the siege of *Constantinople*, and his general, *Moslim*, made an irruption into the imperial territories, out of *Asia*; from whence he carried off immense plunder, and a vast number of prisoners. The *Greek* emperor was no stranger to *Walid's* preparations, and would willingly have struck up a peace with him. With this view he sent a most magnificent embassy to *Damascus*, and *Daniel Sniopensis*, one of his ambassadors, was privately instructed by him, to collect together all the particulars he could learn, concerning the califf's preparations. The embassy appears to have been fruitless, and the report which *Daniel* made of the califf's immense

immense preparations, indicated very plainly that his real view was to lay siege to *Constantinople*, both by sea and land. The emperor was not wanting to himself on this occasion, he augmented his marine, he formed great magazines, and he ordered all the inhabitants, who could not lay in three year's provisions, to depart from *Constantinople*; which, at the same time he took care to fortify, in the most effectual manner. But in the ninety-sixth year of the Hejra, which answers to the year of Christ 715, the califf, *Walid*, died; in the forty-eighth year of his age, and the tenth year of his reign.

The *Arabs* generally resembled one another very much, and especially the men of rank amongst them. *Walid*, like his predecessors and countrymen, was tall, thin, and swarthy, pitted with the small-pox, but of a very robust constitution, and passionate temper. His historians, however, seem not to have done him justice in saying, that he was cruel, for we meet with no particular instances of it, excepting his continuing *Hejaye* in his governments, which, considering the nature of the people he had to rule, was, perhaps, absolutely necessary. It cannot be denied, that *Walid* introduced into his dominions a much finer taste in architecture than ever they had known before, witness the magnificent mosques he erected at *Jerusalem*, and *Medina*, as well as at *Damascus*. He was likewise the author of many other useful institutions, such as founding hospitals for sick people, and building caravanferas for the entertainment of the poor, and of travellers. His memory, however, lies under the disadvantage of being variously represented; the *Persian* historians being very severe to it, but those of *Syria* more favourable.

Solyman the son of Abdolmalec.

THE throne of the califfs knew no vacancy, the successor being always recognized on the same day on which his predecessor died. This was the case with *Solyman*, his brother and successor of *Walid*, and one of the most amiable princes that ever sat upon the throne of the califfs. He began his reign by freeing a great number of prisoners, who had been confined under his brother. He redressed a great number of grievances, and encouraged his subjects to cultivate commerce. But, in the first year of his reign, *Katiba*, his governor of *Korasan*, headed a rebellion against him. The califf's virtues, however, had endeared him so much to his subjects, that the people of themselves put *Katiba* to death, and chose one *Waki* to be their leader, until another was appointed by the califf. His name was *Yezid*,

Yezid, and he extended the Moslem empire, as far as the tract lying between the *Euxine*, and the *Caspian* sea, comprehending the great territory of *Georgia*. This, we are told, was not done without an immense effusion of blood, but the califf's troops were generally victorious, and they forced the inhabitants to submit to an annual tribute.

who sends
a great
army to
besiege
Constanti-
noble.

But the reduction of *Constantinople*, for which such vast preparations had been made, during the late reign, continued to be the great object of *Solyman*. *Leo Isaurus* had the address to avert the storm from falling upon his dominions by agreeing with the califf's proposals, but having fortified himself to his satisfaction, he grew less regardful of the *Arabs*, and *Solyman* ordered his brother *Moslim* to advance against *Constantinople*, at the head of about one hundred and twenty thousand men. In order to make the more sure of his blow, *Moslim* marched first to *Amorium*, in *Phrygia*, and then to *Pergamus*, in *Nysia*, both which places he made himself master of, and wintered, during the ninety-seventh year of the *Hejra*, in the lesser *Asia*. Next year, which answered to the year of Christ 716, *Moslim* pursued his march to *Constantinople*, being assisted by a fleet of no fewer than one thousand, eight hundred ships, many of them of very great burthen, under the command of *Solyman*, the califf's admiral; and this similarity of names has probably given rise to the mistake of some historians, who have said, that the califf *Solyman*, was present at the siege. *Moslim*, arriving before *Constantinople*, passed the *Hellispont*, and carrying his troops over to *Thrace*, he defeated the imperial army under the walls of *Constantinople*; and formed the siege of the capital. But he depended chiefly on his shipping, and particularly upon twenty capital vessels, which were full of some of the best *Arab* troops, which were reduced to ashes by fireships sent against them by the besieged; who on this occasion employed that dreadful kind of fire that burnt in the water, and struck the *Arabs* with inexpressible consternation. This happened on the first of *September*, and though, during the winter, which was excessively severe, *Moslim's* army received all kind of supplies, by the califf's orders, he was unable to make any progress in the siege; and was reduced to the greatest misery. We are told that *Yezid*, and another admiral from *Egypt*, brought to their assistance no fewer than one thousand, one hundred and sixty ships, with provisions; but the inclemency of the season and the defence made by the *Greeks*, destroyed prodigious numbers of their men. Above all, the liquid fire, as it is called, filled the *Arabs* with such terror, notwithstanding their native intrepidity, that they durst not continue their attacks. Their ships, whenever they appeared, were destroyed by the liquid fire, and the *Greeks* found means to open a communication between *Constantinople* and the main land, by which the garrison were supplied.

His immense
losses before
that city.

plied with reinforcements, and all other necessaries. In short, the *Greeks* were every where victorious, and even beat *Moslim* out of his camp; by which, being cut off from all further supplies, first a famine, and then a plague ensued amongst his troops, so that they were obliged to feed upon their horses, asses, and, at last, even upon one another. The emperor, however, being afraid, that upon the return of the spring, the Mahometan army might be enabled to carry their point, proposed an accommodation with *Moslim*, who obstinately refused all terms. This brought on a general engagement, in which the *Arabs* lost twenty-two thousand men, with all their shipping; and, consequently, all the means of farther supplies. According to the *Greek* authors, only ten of their ships escaped being destroyed, either by tempest, or by the liquid fire of the *Greeks*; so that *Moslim* was in the end compelled to raise the siege, which he did under the most mortifying circumstances; for besides those destroyed by the *Greeks*, he lost sixty thousand of his men by famine and pestilence; and it is thought that not a single man of all the hundred and fifty thousand that went out originally against *Constantinople*, returned to their own country.

The
siege is
raised.

The affairs of the *Arabs* did not prosper much better in *Spain*, where *Musa* and *Tarif* still continued to command. Both of them being very rapacious after plunder, they did each other mutual disservices at the califf's court. Being united, however, by interest, they took the cities of *Toledo*, and *Saragosa*; and exercised such cruelties that the natives retired to the mountains, where they were headed by *Don Pelajo*, commonly called *Pelagius*, and *Zimines*, both of them descended from the antient kings of *Spain*. But in the mean time animosities run so high between *Musa* and *Tarif*, that both of them were recalled by the califf to give an account of their conduct. *Musa* left his command to his son *Abdalaziz*, whom, we are told, married the widow of *Roderic*, whose name was *Egilona*, and kept his court at *Seville*, where he exercised a sovereign authority over the natives of the country, whom, by his wife's advice, he sought all opportunities of obliging. The mildness of his government gained over so many of the *Spaniards*, that they became as it were one people, under the character of *Mozarabes*; and even the missals for divine service were composed in *Mozarabic* language, and were used for many years after, as will be more particularly seen in the history of *Spain*. It is certain that *Oppas*, the archbishop, or bishop, of *Seville*, one of the sons of *Wititza*, who had been dethroned, and assassinated, by *Roderic*, was more instrumental than any other *Spaniard* in the conquest of that country by the *Arabs*. Count *Julian*, who was his brother-in-law, and another bishop, named *Torizo*, joined him: and though, as we have already seen, count *Julian* was,

The
Arabs de-
feated in
Spain.

History of
Pelagius.

Fine, imprisonment, and death, of *Musa*.

Death of *Ayub*, the califf's son.

was, perhaps with justice, suspected by the *Moors*, yet the archbishop of *Seville* swore allegiance to them, and thereby preserved the remains of Christianity, that still existed in *Spain*. When *Tarif* returned to the califf's court, he committed the care of the troops he commanded, and which were destined to act against *Pelagius*, to *Al Kaman*, an *Arab* general of great abilities. *Pelagius*, with no more than one thousand faithful followers, retired to the rocks of *Asturia*, where he made choice of mount *Ausena*, for his chief residence, and disposed of his little band to so much advantage, that he was inaccessible by *Kaman*. The latter, however, thinking that it was impossible for *Pelagius* to subsist under such disadvantages, and such a handful of men, employed archbishop *Oppas* to persuade him to submit. But though *Oppas* attempted this, he did not succeed; and *Kaman* was obliged to assemble a great army to attack him. *Kaman* found this impracticable for a whole season. But in the ninety-ninth year of the *Hejra*, which answers to the 717 and 718th year of *Christ*, *Kaman* attempted to dislodge *Pelagius* from the famous fastness which he held on the summit of the mountain, and for this purpose he employed the flower of his troops, who were composed of *Spaniards*, as well as *Arabs*, *Moors*, and *Africans*. The attack was so unsuccessful, that *Kaman* not only lost twenty thousand of his men in it, but afterwards almost the whole of his army; the *Christians* issuing forth, and, by the advantage of their situation, either putting their enemies to the sword, or obliging them to leap down the precipices, in search of a more uncertain death. *Kaman* himself fell in this action, and *Oppas* was taken prisoner; and, it is to be presumed, was privately put to death. As to *Pelagius*, he was certainly, according, to *Muslim*, as well as *Christian* authors, a prince of great spirit and abilities, and the *Spaniards*, as usual, have embellished his history with great numbers of miracles. As to *Tarif*, he made good his accusation against *Musa*, whom the califf imprisoned, and fined in an immense sum of money, for which he is said to have died of heart-break. His son *Abdalaziz*, however, still continued to reign in *Spain*, but being, by his wife, persuaded to wear his diadem, or tiara, in the manner of the *Goths*, he became so much suspected by the *Arabs*, that he was put to death; and was succeeded by one *Ayab*, who transported the seat of the *Arab* government from *Seville*, to *Corduba*. But *Ayab* himself becoming suspected to the califf, was recalled; and *Alahor* sent in his place.

It was about this time, that the califf's son, whose name was likewise *Ayab*, died. His father, in imitation of some of his predecessors, had taken care that he should be recognized, by his chief nobility, as his successor in the califat. Upon the death of this young prince, *Solyman*, who did not long survive him, sent for *Raja*, his vizier, or prime

prime minister, whom he ordered to draw up an instrument, naming *Omar*, the son of *Abdalaziz* to be the first in succession, with the government to *Yezid*, the califf's own brother. This instrument was kept a profound secret, but *Raja*, by the califf's express order, assembled all appoints the chief nobility, and obliged them to take an oath of a succession to the person whoever he was, who had been nominated by the califf to the succession. This they not only readily did, but separately came into the califf's chamber, as he lay on his death-bed, and unanimously assured him of their readiness to obey his last will. Soon after, *Omar*, who was thoroughly disposed to do so, meeting with *Raja*, and understanding that the califf was actually dead, asked him seriously the name of the person appointed for the successor. *Raja* very wisely declined to give him any such information, until the nobility were once more re-assembled, and the califf's will opened in their presence. This was accordingly done, and *Omar*'s name appearing, he was immediately recognized as the lawful califf.

The cause of *Solyman*'s death is variously represented. His death Some say that he was poisoned in a draught of milk, and and character. that one of the many wives he had, foretold his fate. If this is true, his death was, probably, owing, either from a motive of ambition in his brother, for having set him aside from the succession, which, by the manner in which the nomination was conducted, he might more than suspect; or of jealousy in the wife, or perhaps of both. We are told, however, that, notwithstanding all his virtues, he was very intemperate, especially in eating; and that he could, by way of preparative to a hearty dinner, eat three roasted lambs for his breakfast. In short, according to some Moslem authors, he devoured every day an hundred pounds weight of meat; but, though this appears incredible, yet it is very possible that his death, as we find it in some good accounts, was owing to his indigestion.

Solyman, though he reigned not quite three years, and was but about forty at the time of his death, gave great proofs both of his virtue and capacity. The mild beginnings of his administration conciliated to him the affections of his subjects, that he appears to have been a more absolute prince than any of his predecessors. The profound submission with which his appointment of the succession was received, and executed, is one proof of this. Another is the ease with which he reduced the immense power of his generals in *Spain*. In his public works, like his brother, he was magnificent and costly; and, notwithstanding the great checks which his arms met with, both in *Greece*, and *Spain*, we read of no rebellion, or disaffection, that happened in his government; excepting that already mentioned, under *Katiba*. Besides his works of magnificence, he completed many of use; and though his marine was unfortunate

in his expedition against *Constantinople*, yet his ships are said to have been very large, numerous, and well appointed, He erected a famous *Mikeas*, or Nilometer, a pillar of vast use, in measuring the rise and fall of the waters of the *Nile*, and is of the greatest importance to the inhabitants of *Egypt*. According to a learned writer, who has described it, this pillar is still remaining, and the situation of it agrees perfectly well with that assigned to it by the best authorities. Amongst the other great things he did, he is said, by the advice of one of his ministers, one *Jaafar*, to have struck money of much better alloy, than that of his father *Adolmalec*; and that fine kind of money has, ever since, passed under the name of *Jaafarian*. In his person he was tall and comely, and so amiable in his manner that he was called by his subjects 'The key of goodness.' It has been observed by historians, that every califf made use of some pious sentence upon his seal; that of *Solyman* was very remarkable; being, "I believe in God our Saviour."

Omar, the son of Abdalaziz.

Hej. 99. **T**HE new califf, though not the next in blood to the late one, was an immediate descendant of the house of *Ommiyah*, and he succeeded to the califat on the twenty-first of *February*, in the year of Christ 718. The first act of his sovereignty was, to say the funeral prayers over his predecessor's body, and to give the robe he wore to the poor, after he had, from the pulpit harranged the people, in a strain of great piety and moderation. Those were the virtues that had recommended him to the succession. He not only refused to mount any of the fine horses, brought him from his predecessor's stables, but even to enter the palace, for fear of disturbing the late califf's wives, or family; to whom he shewed all possible indulgence. We are told, however, that at the beginning of his reign, he conferred some marks of liberality upon the great officers of state, being afraid of an assassination from his appointed successor, *Yezid*, a prince of an abandoned character.

His modesty. But the chief action of this califf's reign, and which proves him to have been a great politician, was, his abolishing the solemn malediction, which, ever since the death of *Ali*, had been pronounced, by the princes of the house of *Ommiyah*, against the calif and his descendants. In order to effect this with a better grace, *Omar* privately ordered a certain *Jew*, who resorted to his court, to ask him, in public for his daughter in marriage. The *Jew* obeyed, and *Omar*, affecting a surprise, asked him how that could be, since

since their religions were different. But, replied the *Jews*, did not *Mahomet* give his daughter to *Ali*? *Ali*, said *Omar*, was a Moslem, and the case is not the same; he was, besides, commander of the faithful." "Then," rejoins the *Jew*, "how came you to pour out solemn maledictions in your mosques?" *Omar*, upon this, turns upon his principal courtiers, who he took care should be present, and desired them to answer the *Jew*. But they acknowledged their inability, upon which the califf declared the imprecation to be wicked and absurd, and abolished it. He did not stop here in his generosity to the family of *Ali*, but, having found out its descendants; he restored to them the district of *Fiddak*, which was the original estate, bestowed by the prophet, when he gave his daughter in marriage to *Ali*.

The *Arab*
commi-
nation
abolished.

Omar, upon the whole, however, appears to have been an enthusiast in his own principles; for he interrupted the tranquility, and abolished the immunities which the Christians had enjoyed in his dominions under the three last califfs. He ordered many of them to be put to death, and shewed favour to few of them, but those who embraced Mahometanism. He had even the presumption to draw up a formulary of his faith, and to send it, attended with a letter, to the *Greek* emperor, whom he was in hopes thereby to convert. In *Spain*, don *Pelajo* still continued to hold out, but his followers were too few for him to act in any otherwise than upon the defensive. On the other hand *Alabor*, or, as the *Spaniards* call him *Alabor*; whom *Omar* continued in the government of *Spain*, acted with great tyranny, and ravished the *Narbonese Gaul*, exercising vast cruelties, and raising large contributions, upon all the Christians, particularly those of *Gorduba*, who did not implicitly embrace Mahometanism. This procedure squared the better with a bigotted government, because, according to the best authorities (both *Arab* and *Spanish*) a great number of the Moslems there, had, by this time, either embraced the Christian religion, or had grown very indifferent about their own. We, therefore, learn, that *Alabor* arbitrarily put many, even of them, to death in *Spain*, in order to compel them to discover their riches.

The
Christians
persecu-
ted.

Progress
of the
Arabs in
Spain.

From these, and many other proceedings, it appears pretty plain, that though *Omar*, in his own way, was a devout, religious prince, yet he was unequal to the weight of so prodigious an empire as that of the califat. His abolishing the curse, or malediction, against *Ali*, and his family, gave infinite scandal to many of his zealous subjects in *Syria*; who exclaimed, that their religion was neglected, while others of them thought, that he had not done enough; and that as he had thereby condemned the practice of the house of *Ommyah*, he ought to order the princes of that family to be as solemnly cursed, as he had cursed *Ali*. This

Dissatis-
faction at
Omar.

was the opinion of one *Shuzib*, who drawing together a great number of followers on that account, in the year of the Hejra 101, broke into open rebellion against *Omar*, and his government. *Omar*, instead of suppressing him by force of arms, desired a conference with the heads of the faction, who insisted upon his cursing the princes of the house of *Ommiyah*. Upon his refusing to agree to that, they reproached him with the bad qualities of his successor *Yezid*, and demanded that he should be set aside from the succession. But, though the mention of *Yezid*'s vicious qualities drew tears from the califf, yet he did not venture to comply with their request, and his coolness, or, rather, irresolution, in this matter, proved afterwards his ruin.

His injustice.

His pusillanimity was the same in all other respects, and sometimes led him into acts of injustice. The Christians of *Damascus*, presuming upon the report of his meekness and virtue, applied to him, in a body, to have the Church restored to them, of which they had been so arbitrarily deprived, by the califf, *Walid*. *Omar* offered them the money, that had been offered them, by *Walid*, in lieu of it, but the Christians peremptorily refusing any pecuniary indemnification, the califf, and his ministers, fell upon a most infamous evasion of the famous capitulation, signed by *Abu Obeidah*, and *Kaled*, for they pretended, that only one part of the city had been delivered up by that capitulation; and that the other, having been taken by storm, all the churches in it belonged to the Moslems; and to this iniquitous decision the Christians were obliged to submit.

the califf poisoned.

The conference, which this mean-spirited califf had held with *Shebib*'s followers, made the chiefs of the house of *Ommiyah* apprehensive, that he would one day consent to set aside the succession of their family. Upon which they bribed a slave to poison him, which was done, after he had reigned about two years and a half, and before he arrived at the age of forty. When he perceived he was poisoned, he betook himself to his bed, but refused to take any medicine that might counterwork the poison, or to swallow even a drop of oil for that purpose. In this condition he was visited by his brother-in-law, *Moslim*, who found him lying on a bed made of palm-leaves, his feet supported by some coarse skins; and himself covered with a very ordinary, coarse, cloth, and wearing a dirty shirt. *Moslim* reproached his sister, who was present, for her suffering her husband, the emperor of the faithful, to appear in such a squalid condition, and requested that he should have, at least, a clean shirt; but she excused herself, by assuring him, that his majesty had not another one to put on. This sordid disposition, though praised even with tears, as proceeding from the humility of so great a prince, could, in reality, be the effects only of, either the most abject avarice, or meer madness. In conformity to the rest of his conduct, he allowed

His forbidity,

and character.

lowed himself and the rest of his family, not more than about twenty-six shillings a day, for him and all their expences. But his devotion, or his hypocrisy, or frenzy, made amends, in the eyes of the zealots he governed, for all his sordid habits; and the *Arab* writers have transmitted his memory to posterity, as excelling even the two first califfs, in their practice of piety, justice, and virtue. After his interment, the house he chiefly resided in was searched, in hopes of some hidden treasure being discovered in it. But all that was found was a coarse coat, and a hempen swing, in which he used to divert himself in his hours of relaxation from prayer

Yezid, the second son of Abdolmalec.

THIS prince, by the mother's side, was descended from *Yezid*, the son of *Moawiyah* I. who was his grandfather, and he himself, as we have already seen, was the son of *Yezid* II. the son of *Abdolmalec*. He came to the califat under great disadvantages. He had been set aside from the succession, and was very unpopular, through his irregularities. His first step was to dispossess all the governors of provinces, which were appointed by his immediate predecessor. A rebellion against him soon broke out, under one *Yezid*, of the house of *Safra*, a man of great power in the *Persian* irak. He had, for some time, been meditating this revolt, and by way of precaution, he had built a strong fortress at *Hormiz*, to which he could retire in case of necessity. The califf ordered his brother *Moslim*, and *Abbas*, one of his generals, to advance against him. The rebels were defeated, with great slaughter, and their leader killed; but this was not till he had made himself master of *Basra*, and *Cufa*. Upon his defeat, and death, his son *Moawiyah* retreated towards his father's fortress at *Hormiz*, but being denied entrance into it by the governor, he was obliged to retreat, with the shattered remains of his army, almost as far as *Indus*. At last he was overtaken by a party of the califf's troops, and killed, or, with his followers, sent a prisoner to *Damascus*, where they were, all of them, put to death, by the califf's orders.

Notwithstanding this seasonable service, performed by *Moslim*, the califf's brother, yet it does not appear that the latter entrusted him with any important share of power, though he was once nominated to the government of *Irak*, and *Korasan*; but upon some disgust or jealousy conceived by the califf, he was soon succeeded by one *Omar*, whose great business in his province was, to expel the invasions of the *Turks*, who were growing every day more and more

Invasion
of the
Turks.

powerful. At first he repulsed them, and his general, *Tara*, made himself master of *Meltahar*, one of the most important fortresses. The *Turkish* khan, however, though obliged to fly, received reinforcements, which enabled him to defeat *Tara*, in his turn, at *Ardebil*; where *Tara* himself, and almost all his troops were slaughtered. This loss, however, was soon after repaired, by *Moslim*, who defeated the *Turks* in a pitched battle, and drove them out of all the califf's dominions.

Image
worship
persecu-
ted.

Such are the lame accounts we have been able to pick up of this califf's affairs in *Asia*, from the *Arab* writers; excepting the alterations he made, with regard to some of his governors, in *Egypt*, or *Irack*, which are very immaterial to an *European* reader. Christian writers, however, particularly *Theophanes*, and *Cedrenus*, with *Dionysius Telmarenfis*, have been very severe upon his memory. The truth is, the worship of images, which is so detestable, not only to Mahometans and Jews, but to all sober Christians; began now to make a great progress, both in *Europe* and all over the *Greek* empire. This idolatry, together with the dreadful persecutions raised amongst the Christians themselves, and on a thousand more frivolous accounts, no doubt raised a horror at the whole profession, amongst zealous Musselmen, and *Yezid* permitted a persecution to be raised on that account. He even went so far as to prohibit a Christian to give evidence in a court of justice, against a Moslem. We are told farther, that, at the instigation of a *Ladicean* Jew, who promised him a reign of forty years, he issued an order against all images, and commanded that those already erected, should be demolished. All this was a natural result of the abhorrence of image-worship, which prevailed among the Moslems. But it is not so easy to account for his exterminating all dogs, pigeons, and cocks, in short, all animals that were of a white colour, unless we suppose, what is by no means improbable, that the *Greek* Christians, in his dominions, professed some idolatrous notions, with regard to animals of that colour. All this happened about the year of our Lord 725, and this brings us to the affairs of *Europe*.

State of
the ca-
liff's af-
fairs in
Spain.

Though the califf united in his own person, the sovereignty both in spirituals and temporals, which made the obedience to him unlimited; yet the prodigious extent of his dominions, and the various constitutions of his subjects, obliged him to trust so much to his governors, particularly in *Spain*, that they were, at the time we now speak of, almost independent; and the subject countries considered them as their immediate sovereigns. One *Zamar*, who seems to have been an *African*, was now the califf's general in *Spain*; as the Christians there continued to be not only very powerful, but very well affected to the Moslem government, under which they enjoyed their religion, liberties,

ties, and properties, more amply than had ever been known in a conquered country. *Zamar* willing to improve those good dispositions, had been very favourable to the natives, which made many of the Moslems in *Spain*, endeavour to do him ill offices at the califf's court. *Yezid* sent him an order to carry the Moslem arms into *France*; and he accordingly passed the *Pyrenæan* mountains, and made himself master of *Narbonne*, the capital of the *Narbonese Gaul*. He then sat down before *Toulouse*, but, while he was besieging it, he was attacked by count *Eudes*, the general of the *Franks*, in his camp, and killed a vast number of his soldiers. Thus *Toulouse* was delivered, and the count immediately after retook *Narbonne*. After this, he prepared to attack, in his turn, the Moslems in *Spain*; but *Yezid* poured a fresh army into *Spain*; and the *Arabs*, in the mean while, chose for their leader one *Abdarahman*, who resigned his command to *Azam*, who had been nominated to it by the califf. The inaccuracy of the Moslem writers, and the ignorance of the Christian, have perplexed, at this period, the dates of facts, and the names of persons, in such a manner, that there is great reason to think *Azar*, and *Zamor*, to have been the same man. If so, he must not have been killed in his expedition into *France*. For, we are told, that he reduced a vast number of places in *Spain*, that never had submitted to former governors; that he enlarged the tribute paid by the Christians; that he built the bridge at *Corduba*, and that he was at last put to death, by his own followers; which agrees with the aversion which, we are told, they conceived for him. The next governor, one *Ambza*, whom the califf sent to *Spain*, meditated a new invasion of *France*, but died before he could carry it into execution, and left the command of the Moslem army to one *Odra*, who made no attempt against *France*. But the whole of this relation, by the Moslem authors, is lame, confused, and, sometimes, inconsistent. In fact, when we consider, that the califf had no correspondence with *Spain*, but through *Africa*, the governors of which were exceedingly powerful; it is very doubtful, whether the califf's authority was at all minded in *Spain*. It is certain, that about the year of the Hejra 193, which we now treat of, the *Arab* governors there took the title of kings of *Corduba*, and that many *Emirs*, or great Moslem lords, set up separate governments in their own name. It is, however, highly probable, that none of them ever formally renounced their subjection to him, and that when there was a competition amongst themselves, his name and authority had great weight in favour of the competitor, who had it on his side. Notwithstanding this, we cannot think; but that the califf's power in *Spain* was, at this time, rather nominal, than actual.

We come now to the close of *Yezid*'s reign, which continued four years and a month. His love of women was

Remarkable circumstances of the califf's death.

his predominant passion; and during his brother's life-time, he had been at the expence of four thousand dinars, for a beautiful slave, called *Hababa*. *Solyman* thought this extravagance so shameful, that he obliged *Yezid* to part with her. When *Yezid* was raised to the califat, his wife asked him whether he could then have any addition to his happiness? and he answered in the affirmative, *Hababa*. She, upon this, out of a peculiar strain of prudence, and regard for her husband, found out, herself, that *Hababa* had been purchased by an *Egyptian*, and she employed agents, who repurchased, and restored her to the califf's arms; by which compliance his wife *Saada*, gained an intire ascendancy, if not in her husband's affections, in his esteem and friendship. His passion, however, for *Hababa* every day encreased, and she attended him in all his parties of pleasure. Happening, one day, to be with her in a delightful garden, in the plains of *Jordan*, a collation of exquisite fruit was served in, and, amongst others, some fine large grapes; a bunch of which he threw to *Hababa*. As she was eating one of the grapes, the stone, being too large, stuck in her throat, so as to occasion convulsions, which, in a short time (some writers say, upon the spot) put an end to her life. This tragical event happening when *Yezid*'s passion for her was stronger than ever it had been, threw him into a deep and fixed melancholy. He would not part with the corps, till it became too putrid to be endured longer above ground; and, even when it was buried, he ordered the grave to be opened, that he might enjoy, once more, the sight of her remains. In this distracted state, he languished for about fifteen days; and then he died, before he reached his thirty seventh year, having first appointed his brother *Hesham*, to be his successor.

His character.

The Moslem historians have been very severe upon the memory of *Yezid*; they represent him as having been indolent, profuse, and devoted to his pleasures. They agree, however, that he was very handsome, and agreeable, in his person.

Hesham, the son of Abdolmalec, and brother to the late califf.

Succeeded by *Hosein*.

Hej. 105.

A.D. 725.

IT was the 105th year of the Hejra, when *Hesham* was recognized as califf, upon his brother's death. The transactions of the first two years of his reign are very obscurely mentioned by historians. All we know, is, that he displaced his own brother *Mahomet* from his government of *Egypt*, and substituted one *Izafan* in his room; he likewise appointed

appointed *Kaled*, the son of *Abdallah*, to the government of *Irack*. *Theophanes*, the Greek historian, informs us, that immediately upon his succession to the califat, he applied himself to the cultivation of those delicious countries he commanded, and in gardening, and planting them, especially towards the frontiers of the Greek emperor's dominions, and that several palaces were built by his orders. It likewise appears, that towards the beginning of his reign, he invaded the territories of the Greek emperor, who was *Leo Isaurus*, a fortunate and spirited prince, tho' without from a mean original; and his generals obliged the califf to retire to *Syria*, with shame and loss. In the 107th year of the Hejra he was more fortunate; for, we are told, that he took *Cæsaria*, and *Capadocia*. One of his generals, *Moawiyah*, at the same time, laid waste great part of the Christian dominions, and another of his generals, *Amer*, laid siege to *Nicæa*, in *Bithinia*, with fifteen thousand men, which was soon after reinforced with eighty-five thousand fresh troops, under the command of *Moawiyah*. But, notwithstanding this vast power, and though they laid great part of the city level, with their battering engines, yet the besieged made so noble a resistance, that the Arab generals were forced to raise the siege, with the loss of the greatest part of their army. The califf's brother, the famous *Moslim*, the son of *Abdolmalec*, the same who besieged *Constantinople*, was still alive; and was accounted, at this time, the greatest, and most fortunate, general, in all the califf's dominions. We know not of any great eminence he possessed, excepting that of military merit. Probably the califfs were jealous of that, on account of his near relation to the throne. He was, however, employed by *Hesham* this year, and he had the good fortune to take the important city of *Neocæsaria*, from which he carried away all the former inhabitants, into exile, excepting the *Jews*; who according to the Christian historians, betrayed the place to him.

From *Neocæsaria*, *Moslim* turned his arms against the *Turks*, who had ravaged *Armenia*, and obliged them to be quiet, and re-established the barrier of the califf's empire, at a place called by the antients the *Portæ Caspiæ*, near the *Caspian Sea*. The shameful divisions which still remained amongst the Christians in the eastern countries, rendered their religion a reproach to humanity. *Egypt* was then divided between the *Melchites*, and the *Jacobites*, two sects of Christians, who hated one another, more than they did the *Mahometans*. One *Cosmas*, a *Melchite*, who, we are told, was a mechanic, and so illiterate, that he could neither read or write, had been appointed patriarch of *Alexandria*; and he became, partly from his ignorance, and partly, as some authors say, from a large sum of money, which he presented to the califf, who was excessively covetous,

A mechanic made a patriarch.

so

so great a favourite with that prince, that he ordered *Abdallah*, his governor of *Egypt*, to put the Melchite patriarch in possession of all the churches of that country, which had been held by the Jacobites; ever since the conquest of *Egypt* by the Moslems. This created a great revolution in the state of Christianity, in the eastern countries, where the Jacobites, till then, had exercised all the ecclesiastical powers.

Inroads of the Turks continue. As to other *Asiatic* affairs, it appears that the *Turks*, notwithstanding the checks they had received from *Moslim*, made a fresh inroad into the califf's dominions; upon which that general marched against them into *Capadocia*, where he took some places, and again continued his progress towards the *Caspian Sea*. From the general strain of the historians of that time, the *Turks* were then a very powerful, and a warlike, people; and, by historians, they are indiscriminately, with other *Tartars*, denounced *Huns*. Having all *Tartary*, at that time one of the most powerful countries in all the world; and reaching to a greater extent than, perhaps, all *Asia* besides, behind them; repeated defeats could not be said to diminish their numbers, and they were now become so powerful under their khan, or military sovereign, that *Moslim* himself was obliged to return, without doing any thing effectual against them. This expedition happened about the 112th year of the *Hejra*. In the mean while, both the califf and *Moslim*, when the affairs of the field gave them leave, were improving the affairs of the califat, by building forts, bridges, towns, and villages, and making other improvements, where they were most wanted. All this, however, could not be done, but by the califf's raising immense sums upon his subjects; by which he obtained the character of being the most avaricious prince, that had ever sat upon the Moslem throne.

Affairs of Spain, and the Moslems. The affairs of the Moslems in *Europe*, by means of the *European* historians, are during this period, better preserved than those in *Asia*. After the noble exploits performed by count *Eudes* who was duke of *Aquitain*, one *Yahya* was appointed by *Hesham*, or, according to others, by *Yezid*, the Moslem governor of *Spain*, and proved to be a man of abilities, though a severe justiciary. During his government there, he protected the Christians, and they, and the *Arabs*, lived in great harmony together. But *Roderic* of *Toledo*, differs widely, both as to dates and facts, with other historians of that time, though he is, perhaps, more to be depended upon than they. We shall, however, without perplexing our readers with fruitless conjectures, endeavour to represent them, as near as possible, to probability. The brave *Pelagius* still remained unsubdued, and had obtained many signal advantages against the Moslems, whose great views of extending their conquests over all the continent of *Europe*, perhaps did not suffer them to employ their arms

in reducing the rocks of *Austria*. It does not appear at what time *Yahya* died, or resigned the government. But, we are told, that one *Odoysa*, was sent by the governor of *Africa* to succeed him; but he, proving unequal to the trust, *Hesham* appointed another governor, one *Yaman*, who was in a few months succeeded by another, called *Othman*; who was disposed in four months, by *Haytam*, the son of *Obeid*. Such quick revolutions of governors, strongly confirm what we have already observed, that the califf's authority was very little regarded in *Spain*. A conspiracy was soon formed amongst some of the most considerable *Spanish Arabs*, against *Hesham*, but that being discovered, some of the conspirators were put to death, and he, most impolitically, ordered others to be whipt in public. This happening to be the punishment of one *Yezid*, a man of quality, and great abilities, amongst the *Arabs*, he found means to escape to *Damascus*, where he gave the califf a full account of the state of his affairs in *Spain*, and being seconded by one *Machimen*, the califf was prevailed upon at their request, to appoint *Abdalraman* to be his governor of *Spain*. At the same time, *Machimen* was dispatched by the califf, with a proper authority, to displace *Haytam*, and to punish him, which he did, by ordering him to be publicly whipt, loaded with irons, carried in derision upon an ass, through the streets of *Corduba*, where he had formerly appeared with all the ensigns of royalty, and then to be imprisoned during life,

Abdalrahman, either afraid of *Haytam*'s tyranny, or distrusting the sincerity and intentions of *Machimen*, had at this time retired into obscurity; so that *Mahomet*, the son of *Abdallah*, was made governor of *Spain*, under the califf, with a kind of interregnal power, which he exercised for two months, when *Abdalraman* appeared, and took upon himself the government. In the mean while, it is certain, that *Eudes*, the duke of *Aquitain*, was, in a quarrel, the subject of which is foreign to this history, defeated by *Charles Martel*, and began to tamper with the *Arabs* of *Spain*, for assistance. It does not clearly appear that he directly applied to *Abdalraman*, but there is reason to believe, that he negotiated with one *Muniz*, an *Arab* of great power in *Spain*, who promised to assist him, as soon as he could divest *Abdalraman* of his government. As the seal of this confederacy, the count is said to have bestowed upon *Muniz*, his sister in marriage; the most celebrated beauty in her time. But *Muniz* found himself greatly inferior, in force, to *Abdalraman*, and was obliged to shut himself up in a city in *Spain*, which was besieged by *Abdalraman*; who made such a progress in the siege, that *Muniz* in despair, broke his neck down a precipice, and his wife was sent in as a slave, and a present to the califf. It appears that count *Eudes*, finding *Muniz* unable to make head against *Abdalraman*,

They are
courted by
Eudes
duke of
Aquitain.

An insur- *Abdalraman*, was cautious enough to keep his troops from
 rection joining him. But *Abdalraman*, who appears to have been a
 suppressed thorough *Arab*, easily perceived the secret designs of *Eudes*,
 and that he intended to have introduced into *France* a body
 of Moslem troops. He therefore resolved to do that for
 himself which *Muniz* was to have executed for *Eudes*.
 But the reader here is not to imagine, that the troops with
 which he intended to execute this mighty scheme were
 composed of *Arabs*. These, if by them we understand the
 native *Arabs*, could be but few; and yet it is certain that
 one half of the people of *Spain*, at this time, were fo-
 reigners; and subjects to the califf from other countries,
 especially *Afric*. This is not to be wondered at, when we
 consider the vast superiority of the soil and climate of *Spain*,
 to the desarts of *Barbary* and *Numidia*, and the great conve-
 niency which the Moslem governors of *Afric* had, after
Spain came under the power of the califfs, to pour their
 numbers from the one country into the other.

Great
 power of
 the Mos-
 lems in
Spain.

They in-
 vade
France
 with forty
 thousand
 men-

It was not surprising that a nation so overstocked, as *Spain*
 must at that time have been, with inhabitants, should readily
 join with *Abdalraman*, in his intention to make himself and
 them masters of the fine southern provinces of *France*.
 Upwards of 400,000 men enlisted under his standards;
 the greatest army that, perhaps, ever marched from the
 southern to the northern parts of *Europe*. It could not be
 said they marched, for, like the wild beasts of their own
 native plains, they rushed from their haunts, fired with the
 rage of slaughter, rapine, and devastation. These were
 the calamities that marked *Abdalraman's* progress. He pro-
 ceeded to *Arles* upon the *Rhone*, where he met with a feeble
 resistance, from a body of *Franks*, whom he either cut in
 pieces, or pushed into the *Rhone*, where they perished.
 Having passed the rivers *Garone*, and *Dordone*, he was op-
 posed by count *Eudes*, who saw himself in danger of be-
 ing swallowed up in the general calamity; but he was de-
 feated, and *Abdalraman* proceeded to *Tours*; ravaging, and
 laying waste, with fire and sword, all places, both sacred
 and profane, through which he passed.

Their
 progress
 in *Italy*
 and *Sicily*.

While *Abdalraman* was thus ravaging *France*, the *Moors*,
Africans, and *Arabs*, all of them subject to the califf, were
 making fresh irruptions into all parts of *Europe*, and pos-
 sessed themselves of *Calabria*, *Apulia*, and even *Sicily* itself.
 The weakness of the *European* governments, at this time, the
 ambition of the popes, and divisions of religion, undoubt-
 edly, were the chief causes of the progress of those barba-
 rians. *Abdalraman*, whom all of them acknowledged to be
 their head in *Europe*, was now at the height of his con-
 quests. But while he was destroying towns and all the
 countries round them, with unrestrained fury, having laid
 the churches, and most magnificent buildings, all in
 ruins. *Charles Martel*, then the greatest warrior in *Europe*,
 being

being joined by count *Eudes*, and reinforced by a body of *They are Germans*, attacked the barbarians near *Tours*, and gave defeated them one of the most complete defeats, that we read of by *Charles Martel*, in history. No fewer than three hundred and seventy-five thousand of the califf's subjects are said to have been killed in this engagement: but this number must be understood to comprehend all the women, children, and slaves, who followed the barbarians, and *Abdalraman* himself fell in the engagement; the loss of the Christians, on this occasion, is said not to have exceeded one thousand five hundred. Notwithstanding this dreadful blow, by which they lost all their baggage, and their plunder, to an immense value, yet they still kept possession of *Narbonne*, which was besieged by the *French*, though the siege was raised, by *Charles Martel*, who again defeated the barbarians, with a most prodigious slaughter. Authors differ greatly as to the particular year in which those great events happened. It is most likely, that they took up several years, that is, from the year 727, to the year 731, if not 732, in which year, it is most probable, the great battle of *Tours* was fought.

It is proper to keep the history of the Moslem affairs in *Europe*, during this califat, as much as possible, separate from those that happened in other parts of the world. Upon the death of *Abdalraman*, *Hesham* sent one *Abdolmalec*, an *Arab* of great distinction, to be his governor of *Spain*: but this new governor was either so unfit for his post, or, which is more probable, was so little regarded by his subjects, that the *Franks* insulted him in his own government. He attempted to pass the *Pyreneans*, at the head of an army, but was repulsed, and obliged to take shelter in *Spain*, with great shame, and loss. At the same time, the *Spanish Moslems* sent over great complaints against *Abdolmalec*; to the califf. who thereupon appointed *Okba* to succeed him in his government. This *Okba* was more disagreeable than even his predecessor had been, to the califf's subjects in *Spain*. The excessive avarice of his master, encreasing with his years, he omitted no act of oppression to enrich the califf. As he affected a vast strictness in his religion, he put the laws severely in force against the Christians, whom he obliged to pay, to the utmost farthing of their tribute. He was likewise very rigorous in exacting of the Moslems, the most strict performance of their religious duties, and ceremonies; and he brought to condign justice all the great officers, especially those who had enriched themselves, beginning with his predecessor; whom, as soon as he arrived at *Corduba*, he threw into prison, loaded with irons. It appears, however, from the face of history, that he could not have proceeded in this manner, had he not been strongly supported by the califf's governors in *Africa*. For, after he had reduced the affairs of his province to a state of seeming tranquility, he fitted out a fleet, with a design,

They are again defeated.

The califf's oppressive government in *Spain*.

Rebellion
and revo-
lution
there.

to revenge the prodigious losses, which his country had suffered from the *French*. But, while this fleet lay off *Saragosa*, he received certain intelligence, that the subjects of his government in *Spain* were forming a conspiracy against him. This obliged him to postpone the resolution of invading *France*; and, after touching at *Corduba*, finding the news of the conspiracy to be well founded, he sailed over to *Africa*; where, obtaining the command of a body of troops, he returned to *Spain*, and put to death the chiefs of the conspiracy, that had been formed against him. This severity, however, does not seem to have restored tranquility to his government, for we find, in the 124th year of the *Hejra*, he was obliged to resign it, to his predecessor, *Abdolmalec*. As the Moslems who were settled in *Africa* were extremely ignorant, we know little that happened, with regard to the califf's affairs in *Spain*, during the remainder of his reign, but from Christian authors. We learn, however, enough to perceive, that the replacing *Abdolmalec* in the government of *Spain*, was highly disagreeable to the *Moors* of *Africa*, who thought that *Spain* belonged more properly to them, and their countrymen, than to the califf. We accordingly are told, by *Roderic of Toledo*, that in the 124th year of the *Hejra*, which answers to the year of our Lord 742, a rebellion broke out in the interior parts of *Africa*, to which, it seems, the califf's arms had penetrated; and that the rebel general, after defeating a great army sent against him by the califf, invaded *Spain*, and declared himself independent. According to the accounts we have, his army was not composed of those swarthy kind of *Moors* that, at that time, were settled in *Spain*; but of a blacker kind, drawn from *Nigritia*, but very resolute, hardy, and barbarous. *Abdolmalec*, *Hesham*'s governor of *Spain*, opposed them when they laid siege to *Toledo*, and obliged them to raise the siege, with great slaughter. But as they were reinforced with fresh supplies of barbarians, *Abdalarman*, who seems to have been an *Arab*, the usurper's general, marched against *Corduba* itself, which he took, and *Abdolmalec* himself falling alive into his hands, he put him to a cruel death.

Moslim
again
marches
against
the *Turks*.

We are now to return to the other transactions of the califf's vast empire, and therefore must return to the year of our Lord 731. In this year, we are told, but with no particulars attending the relation, that *Moslem*, the califf's warlike brother, again marched against the *Turks*, and took several of their khan's towns, with a vast many prisoners, and a great deal of plunder. The califf had now two sons grown to man's estate, and both of them commanding armies. *Moawiyah*, one of them, made an irruption into *Paphlagonia*, from whence he carried an immense booty, and a great number of Christians into captivity. *Hesham*'s other son, *Solyman*, at the head of another army, made an irruption

interruption into another part of the *Greek* emperor's territories; and, after taking the fortress of *Pilozonium*, and ravaging the adjacent country, he defeated a *Greek* army, and then returned home. Next year, however, he renewed War with his inroads, at the head of an army of ninety thousand the *Greeks*. But two of the generals who acted under him, *Mabec*, and *Abdallah*, having advanced as far as *Synnoda*, in *Phrygia*, at the head of fifty thousand men, was defeated by the emperor *Leo*, in person, and his son, *Constantine Copronymus*, with such slaughter, that forty-five thousand of the Moslem army were cut off. This great defeat, which did so much honour to the old emperor, did not, however, prevent the restless Moslems, under the two princes *Moawiyah*, and *Salyman*, from taking the first opportunity that presented, to renew their inroads into the *Greek* territories. *Moawiyah* met with but indifferent success, and in his return to *Syria*, he was killed by a fall from his horse. *Salyman*, who invaded the imperial *Armenia*, was not more fortunate; nor can those plundering expeditions, against defenceless, open countries, for no other purposes, but those of plunder and slavery, be mentioned, but with indignation and horror.

The bad success of the califf's arms against the *Greeks*, at Rebellion this time, seems to have encouraged one *Alic* to rebel against the califf, who sent against him two generals, called *Kaliu*, califf. and *Zohair*. This rebellion seems to have broken out in a province, called by *Ptolomy*, *Arachosia*, and by *Pomponius Mela*, *Ariana*; lying between *Cazimiania*, and the *Indus*, which, according to *Ptolomy*'s map, bounds it on the one side, as the *Arachosian Lake* does on the other. This is a circumstance we rather take notice of, because it has been remarked by other authors; and it shows to what a prodigious extent the Moslems had now carried their arms. The rebel, *Alik*, advanced to *Sigara*, which *Ptolomy* has marked to be a town of that province, and he there defeated the califf's troops; perhaps the vast difficulty of defeating him in so remote a province, is the reason why the califf dropt that design, and why we meet with no farther mention of him in history.

Hesham's reign was more chequered with good and bad An impostor fortune, than that of any of his predecessors, though the tor pre-latter seems to have been most predominant. Exasperated tends to by the repeated defeats he had received from the *Greek* em- be the em-peror, he seems to have formed a project this year, which peror of has been often practised in history, which was that of setting *Greece* up a pretender to the *Greek* empire. The person he pitched upon was by birth a *Pergamenian*, whom *Hesham* pretended to be the son of *Justinian II*. This *Pergamenian* had been taken in battle by *Solyman*, the califf's son, but whether the imposture was of his own or the califf's contriving, does not appear. *Hesham*, however, ordered that he

he should, in all respects, be treated as the rightful heir of the *Greek* empire; and assigned him a body of guards, and very splendid equipages, with which he paraded through the chief parts of his dominions, in hopes of animating the *Greeks* to a rebellion against the reigning emperor; but we know of no success that either he or the impostor met with.

Rebellion
at *Cufa*

In the 121st year of the *Hejra*, and the 739th year of *Christ*, one *Zeid*, the son of *Ali*, of the renowned family of *Taleb*, and, consequently, related to the califf, *Ali*, put himself at the head of 1400 *Cufans*, who, with the inhabitants of that city, took an oath of allegiance to him. The califf ordered *Yuseph*, or *Joseph*, then governor of *Basra*, to advance against the rebels, who according to their accustomed inconstancy, and fanaticism, demanded of *Ali*, what was his opinion of *Abubeker*, and *Omar*. His answer seeming to be favourable to their memory, they immediately renounced the allegiance they had so lately sworn to him, and he found his followers reduced to the number of fourteen. Upon this occasion he very justly observed, that the *Cufans* behaved in the same manner to him, as they had done to *Hosein*. He and his few faithful followers, were immediately cut in pieces by *Yuseph*, and his dead body was treated with every kind of indignity, that could be devised. His son had the good fortune to escape.

supprest.

Moslim in-
vades the
Greek em-
pire.

The quick and easy extinction of this rebellion, encouraged the califf to send his brother *Moslim*, again to invade the territories of the *Greek* empire; and he reduced, or rather retook *Catamania*, a considerable city, on the frontiers of *Mesopotamia*, towards the *Lesser Armenia*, and, according to *Ptolemy*, lying in the province of *Comagena*. Another of his generals, *Merwan*, penetrated, this year, as far as *Derbent*, then the seat of the *Turks*, lying between the *Caspian*, and *Exxine*, seas; and obliged their khan to agree to pay an annual tribute to the califf: but the Christian historians give the honour of this expedition to *Solyman*, the califf's son. *Moslim*, the califf's brother, this year died, to the inexpressible loss of the califat, and next year, according to Christian authors, *Hesham* ordered a great number of his

His death.

Christian captives to be put to the sword, in cool blood; a cruelty, of which he seems to have been very capable. In other respects, it must be acknowledged, he was very attentive to the interest of his empire. He ordered a bridge to be built over the *Euphrates*, which joins *Syria* to *Mesopotamia*; and, an inundation having destroyed a famous bridge upon the *Tygris*, it was, by his orders, repaired, and rebuilt. Great part of his dominions, particularly the city of *Edeffa*, was, about the same time, destroyed, by the like inundations. It is said farther to his praise, by Christian authors, who are by no means favourable to his memory, that, towards the latter end of his reign, he grew less cruel than

than he had been to the Christians. This was owing to an intimacy he had contracted with one *Stephen*, a Christian monk, of eminent sanctity, whom he permitted the Christians of *Antioch* to chuse for their patriarch, after that see had been vacant for forty years.

In the twentieth year of his reign, and about the fifty-sixth of his age, the califf, *Hesham*, contracted a quinsy, character which soon carried him out of the world. As to his person, his face was remarkably disagreeable. He was red haired, and of a sandy complexion; and he had squinting eyes. His intellectuals, however, appear, from his history, to have been vigorous; for, notwithstanding his prodigious variety of operations, both in peace and war, he governed by no minister, but inspected every thing himself. He is accused by all historians, to have been excessively avaricious; but that charge receives some abatement, by the many works of magnificence, and use, which he erected throughout the califat. Notwithstanding his passion for money, he was so great a lover of fine cloaths, that he had no fewer than seven hundred coffers, on each of which he had fixed his own seal, full of all kinds of habits, amongst which are reckoned one thousand pairs of drawers, and ten thousand shirts. This passion he probably indulged, by way of reproach, to the sordid appearance which some of his predecessors in the califat, the two *Omars* especially, made in their attire. He was careful of his treasures, as of his cloaths. The inscription upon his seal, had in it both humour, and meaning. It was, A wise man is a fat beast of burden. He was, like the greatest of his predecessors, very punctual in the observance of religious duties, and ceremonies. One of his domestics being accused of drinking wine, keeping mistresses, and playing upon the lute, which was thought, by the *Arabs*, to be an effeminating instrument; he was brought before the califf, who ordered the fellow's drum to be beat about his ears. Upon this the accused party fell a crying; not, he said, for the affront done to himself, but for that done to his lute, which the califf had in contempt, called a drum. A complaint worthy a fantastic, effeminate, *Syrian*. He forbid one of his sons, who alledged an excuse for not coming to prayers in the mosque, that he had no beast to carry him, to ride, for a whole year, upon either horse or camel. Upon the whole, he answered the description of the motto upon his seal, for with a sound judgment, he rendered himself a sordid drudging, beast of burden.

Walid II. son to Yezid II.

He is suc-
ceeded by
Walid II.

NOTWITHSTANDING the bad qualities of the late califf, we do not find that, though he had sons of his own, he did any thing to set aside from the throne, his nephew, *Walid*, who had been named, by his brother *Yezid*, to the succession, upon *Hesham's* death. *Walid*, well knowing the great regard paid by the Moslems, to such kind of nominations, was, during his uncle's life-time, at very little pains to conceal from the public, his natural propensity to pleasure, which gave so much scandal to *Hesham*, that, finding admonitions did him no service, he sent him into a kind of banishment at *Azrak*; where, either from a principle of policy; or being out of the road of temptation, he led a more reformed life. But no sooner did he hear of *Hesham's* death, than he sent an order to a favourite secretary, who had been confined by the late califf, to be set at liberty; and to take upon himself the charge of the immense wealth which *Hesham* had left behind him. The secretary performed this, by affixing the new califf's seal to the doors of all the apartments, where the wealth was deposited, nor could even dead cloaths be found for *Hesham's* corps, till one of his domestics wrapt it up in a common winding-sheet.

Insurrec-
tion a-
gainst
him.

It was in the 125th year of the Hejra, which answers to the 743d year of Christ, when *Walid* ascended the throne of the califfs. The beginning of his reign was disturbed by an insurrection, raised by *Yabya*, the son of *Zeia*, who was defeated, and killed, in the late reign. This young prince, as we have already seen, had, upon his father's defeat, and death, retired to *Balk*, where he maintained himself till the accession of *Walid*, by whose generals he was put to death, and his body was treated in the same ignominious manner, as that of his father had been.

His pro-
digality.

This *Walid II.* was, in his character, almost the reverse of all his predecessors, for he was not only naturally voluptuous, to the last degree, but he took no pains to conceal his debauchery. Even this, perhaps, would not have ruined him, had he, like his predecessors, kept up to the exteriors of his religion. It was indeed no wonder, that in an age, when all religions were, either despicable in themselves, or become odious, through the ignorance, idolatry, or immorality, of its professors, the doctrine of a future state became to be doubted, and at last disbelieved, by many. *Walid* himself was of this number, and indeed it was a doctrine better suited, than any other, to the life he led;

led; and he was impolitic enough, not to add hypocrisy to infidelity; for he made no secret of his principles.

On the other hand, he possessed, in a most eminent degree, the arts of popularity. Having been, during the late califf's reign, greatly restricted in his expences, he no sooner became master of the immense treasures of the empire, than he seemed to give a loose to the rage of prodigality, which indeed was his natural disposition, and which, for some time, he had it in his power to indulge, to its full extent. He laid it down, as a rule, to refuse no one a petition, excepting the friends, and servants of the late califf, whom he punished with great bitterness, for the treatment he had received under their master. His time was spent in cloathing, and feeding, in the most plentiful manner, all the poor objects of compassion in *Damascus*; and all the women in that city were presented with perfumes, and fine attire, at his expence. Being sensible, how disgusting such a conduct must be, to all the sober Moslems, he sought to get upon his side the affections of the army, by augmenting their pay, and he so far carried his point, that, after their example, his subjects swore to acknowledge his sons, *Hakem*, and *Othman*, in their course of birth-right, for his successors.

The same dissolute principle, which induced *Waled* to neglect Mahometanism, prevailed upon him to persecute Christianity; for, we are told, that he ordered the tongue of a *Neapolitan*, at *Damascus*, to be plucked out, for having spoken disrespectfully of the Moslem religion, and then to be banished to *Arabia*, where he suffered martyrdom.

Walid, having got the army to declare in his favour, was He is courted by the neighbouring princes. *Constantine-Copronymus*, having now succeeded his father, *Leo Isaurus*, in the Greek empire, at first attempted to disturb his government, and led an army against his subjects. But, during his absence, *Artabazes*, his brother-in-law, giving out that he was dead, declared himself emperor, and took his eldest son, *Nicephorus*, for his colleague. This obliged *Constantine* to turn his arms against his rival in empire; and *Walid*, having on foot a very fine army, saw himself courted by both parties. *Andreas Spatharius*, was sent ambassador to *Damascus*, from *Constantine*; and *Gregorius Logatheta*, for *Artabazes*.

Walid might now have rendered himself the most glorious prince that ever sat upon the throne of the califfs, could he have observed but the decencies of appearance, before his subjects. But, far from that, he still continued to game, and drink wine, in public. He carried with him to *Mecca*, strong liquors, and dogs, than which, there could not be a greater abomination, in the eyes of the Moslems; and even went so far, as to make a woman, whom he had debauched, read public prayers to the people, under a veil. These, and many other, enormities, were too shocking to

Death
and

be longer endured, and his subjects, as one man, came to a resolution to depose him. *Walid* was then residing at *Beira*, near *Damascus*, one of the most pleasant spots in *Syria*, with only his ordinary guards about him; and, being a professed sensualist, he either trusted to his popularity amongst his soldiers, or, did not think life was worthy of a struggle. The mutineers chose for their leader, *Yezid*, the son of *Walid* I. and marching against the califf, they defeated the few troops he had about him, and advanced to the gates of his palace. Here he presented himself, and put them in mind of his lenity, liberality, and mildness of his government. All this they did not disown, but they reproached him, in their turn, with his vices; and ten of the most resolute of them rushing in, put him to death, without his making the smallest resistance; one of his hands, and his head, were then cut off, and nailed to one of the gates of *Damascus*.

Character

Walid II. at the time of his death, was about forty-two years of age, and he reigned about fifteen months. The *Persian* historians, who are all of them prejudiced against the princes of the house of *Ommiyah*, are very unfavourable to his memory, and tell us, that he even tore in pieces, and trod under foot the *Koran*, an action, which, if true, was as impious, as it was impolitic. Notwithstanding this, it is allowed, that he possessed good natural parts; that he was eloquent, and an excellent poet. He had thirteen children, and his two eldest sons were, immediately upon his death being proclaimed, thrown into prison.

Yezid III. the son of Walid I.

He is suc-
ceeded by
Yezid III.

THE deceased califf had, during the fifteen months of his reign, been so immoderately profuse of the immense treasures left him by his predecessor, that his successor found his coffers empty, so that he was obliged to diminish the pay of the soldiery. The *Arab* historians tell us, that *Yezid* III. was, by hereditary right, king of *Persia*, his mother having been the daughter of *Tiruz*, the son of *Yazdejerd*, or *Xerxes*, the lineal descendant of the old *Persian* monarchs. The califf, therefore inserted his descent by his mother, amongst his other titles, as he likewise did, his being the eldest branch of the house of *Ommiyah*, descended from *Merwan* I. His first care was to make the great men, and people about him, recognize his brother, *Ibrahim*, as heir, and successor, and after him *Adalaziz*, the grandson of the califf, *Abdolmalec*. Those two princes had

His title.

been very active, as well as the new califf himself, in the death of *Walid II.*

Tho' the last mentioned prince's vices were extremely detestable to the people of *Damascus*, and *Syria*, yet the people of the remoter provinces, who felt the mildness of his administration, without knowing of his vices, no sooner heard of his death, than they every where run to arms to revenge it. The people of *Hems* defeated an army sent against them by the califf. *Solyman*, the son of *Hesham*, getting together a body of men, prepared to advance to *Damascus*, the *Palestines* killed their governor, and were in arms. But the most dangerous opponent the new califf met with, was *Merwan*, surnamed *Hymar*, who avowed himself to be the protector of *Walid II.*'s children, and the avenger of his death. He seems, at that time, to have been governor, or to have had great interest, in *Armenia*, for he was so powerful there, that the califf was obliged to give him the governments of *Mansel*, *Aderbijan*, *Armenia*, and *Mesopotamia*. The califf did not long enjoy the fruits of this pacification, for he died in the sixth month of his reign, being past forty years of age, of the plague, at *Damascus*.

In his person, he is said to have been of a thin habit, and a middle size. His principles were in favour of man's free agency, which, amongst the Moslems, is looked upon as heresy. In other respects, though he had no great character before he came to the throne, during his short reign, he is said to have acted with justice and moderation.

Ibrahim, brother to Yezid III.

THE reign of this prince was so short, that he is scarcely mentioned by some historians. We are told, that, at his accession, a terrible pestilence ravaged all the east. But it appears very plain, that all distant provinces were still intent upon revenging the death of *Walid II.* and that the califf found means to bring over to his party, *Solyman*, the son of *Hesham*, whom he made general of his army; yet *Merwan Himar*, made use of the vast power which his government gave him, to raise a great army against him; on account of the hand he had in the death of *Walid II.* *Merwan*, accordingly, first made himself master of *Edessa*, and afterwards marched towards the powerful province of *Kinnisrin*, where he was opposed by *Basbar*, and *Masrur*, two generals who commanded for the califf there. But the pretext of *Merwan's* insurrection was so

specious, that the califf's troops unanimously inlisted under his standard, and delivered his generals prisoners into *Merwan's* hands. The two eldest sons of *Walid I.* *Hakem*, and *Othman*, were still prisoners at *Damascus*; and *Merwan* declared himself their protector; he soon made himself master of *Hems*, where the people swore fidelity to his cause.

His progress.

He was now at the head of sixty thousand men, and he had the advantage of attacking a prince, the weakest, and the most stupid, of any that had yet filled the califat; for such was the character of *Ibrahim*. His general, *Solyman*, however, found means to draw together, one hundred and twenty thousand troops, and, at the head of them, he opposed the progress of *Merwan*. *Solyman's* army, we may presume, consisted of *Damascenes*, and *Syrians*; who held the memory of *Walid II.* in the utmost detestation; for, being invited by *Merwan*, to join him in revenging that califf's death, he was so far from doing it, that a bloody battle ensued, in which *Solyman* was defeated, and obliged to retire to *Damascus*, with the small remains of his army. Here, according to the barbarous policy of the eastern countries, he persuaded *Ibrahim*, to put *Hakem*, and *Oth-*

Ibrahim's cruelty.

man to death. But the young princes had some time before their death, the precaution, and presence of mind, to nominate *Merwan* for their successor, to their fellow prisoner, one *Sheibani*. This nomination, as far as they had power to make it, considering the circumstances they were under, was undoubtedly both wise, and valid; and *Merwan* availed himself of it. *Solyman*, having procured the death of the two young princes, carried off with him all the money he found, belonging to the califf, and made his escape, just as *Merwan* had advanced to the gates of *Damascus*, with his victorious army. *Merwan*, after the defeat of *Solyman*, had given liberty to all his prisoners, who recognized the right of the two murdered princes, and obtained, without resistance, admission into *Damascus*, with his army, where the califf, *Ibrahim*, himself, was the first who recognized him as sovereign, upon *Sheibani* solemnly declaring, that he had been nominated by the two murdered princes, for their successor. *Merwan's* first care was to give a proper interment to the bodies of the two princes; after which, the people of *Damascus*, and *Syria*, had no farther objection against his assuming the exercise of sovereign power. As to the deposed califf, *Ibrahim*, whose reign ends here, he is said, by some, to have survived his sovereignty, which lasted only seventy days, for some years, but others say, for three months; and that he was either assassinated, or put to death by *Merwan's* son. As to his person, we know little or nothing, but that he was very curious in dressing his hair; nor do we find, that he ever repined at his being reduced to a private station, or that he gave any trouble to *Merwan's* government.

Here resigns the califat to *Merwan*.

Merwan

MERWAN II.

MERWAN II. came to the califat in the 127th year of the Hejra, being the 744th year of Christ. He knew that his title, though pretended to be of the house of *Ommiyah*, and though his mother was widow to *Musab*, brother to the califf *Abdallah Zobeir*, was liable to vast objections. In fact, though the Syrians found it extremely beneficial, to live under califf's of the house of *Ommiyah*, because they resided at *Damascus*; yet, as we have often hinted, the old flock of the *Arab* Moslems, who adhered to the *Hesham* family, which was that of *Mahomet*, considered them as little better than usurpers. The heads of the *Heshamites*, after the death of *Hosein*, had made no great figure in the califat, and lived upon their own estates; far remote from the court. The most respected of them, at this time, was *Mahomet*, the son of *Ali*, and the head of the house of *Hesham* descended from *Abbas* the Prophet's uncle. *Mahomet*'s father *Ali*, was alive when the partizans of the house of *Hesham* (for so we are to distinguish it, from the other *Heshamite* families) formed a conspiracy to raise *Mahomet* to the califat. The chief of the conspirators were, *Solyman*, the son of *Kotbair*, *Malic*, and *Kataba*, who being all of them very rich, made a present of an immense sum of money to *Mahomet*, for his support; and to encourage him to aspire to the sovereignty. *Mahomet*, who is said to have been endued with the spirit of prophecy, finding his health declining, or, perhaps, himself unequal for so great an undertaking, declined the offer, with regard to himself, but encouraged it, as to his sons. His principal friends residing at *Korasan*, a correspondence had been formed between them, even during *Hesham*'s reign, and it had been discovered by his governor of *Korasan*, who had put to death *Zaid*, *Mahomet*'s agent, and ten *Cufans* who were then engaged in the conspiracy. We do not, however, perceive that any persecution was raised, on that account, against the house of *Abbas*, though the conspirators continued to make vast preparations, of money, and other necessities, which were to be employed, as soon as a proper opportunity presented, for the execution of their designs. About two or three years before the accession of *Merwan* II. to the califat, *Mahomet* being afresh applied to, to declare himself, he declined it, but foretold, that, after his death, which he perceived was near, his son *Ibrahim* would become the leader of their party; and that when he was slain, his son *Abdallah* would take upon him the Moslem government, and settle the foundation of a new dynasty of califfs; after rooting out the tyrannical house of *Ommiyah*. *Mahomet*, at that time, resided at *Homaima*, an ancient estate of the *Heshamites*.

Hej. 127.

A.D. 744.

Intrigues
in favour
of the
house of
Hesham.Account
of the
house of
Abbas.The head
of it dies
and is

Shamites; and the deputies who treated with him, believing him to be inspired with the spirit of prophecy, kissed the hands of *Abdallah*, as the future emperor of the faithful. Soon after this interview, that is in the year of the Hejra 125, *Mahomet* died. His son *Ibrahim* immediately dispatched an agent, one *Hesham*, to *Korasan*, to animate his friends by his son there, towards the execution of their long meditated design, and he was so well received, that he was sent back, with a fresh remittance of money, to *Ibrahim*.

who employs the famous *Abu Moslem*,
 Upon the accession of *Merwan*, *Ibrahim*, thinking it a favourable opportunity, repaired to *Mecca*; from thence he dispatched *Abu Moslim*, to concert the proper measures with his friends in *Korasan*, for their beginning their operations against *Merwan's* government; and, at the same time, he gave *Abu Moslim* a commission, though he was but nineteen years of age, to be his governor of *Korasan*. *Solyman Kothair*, thinking *Ibrahim* extremely imprudent, for trusting a matter of such danger, and importance, to the management of such a stripling; paid no regard to his commission, and refused to enter into any negotiation with him. But to give a proof of his attachment to *Ibrahim*, he went to two of his friends at *Mecca*, with a fresh recruit of money and other necessaries, which they deposited with *Ibrahim*, for the use of the common cause, and then had an audience from him, upon the state of their affairs. In this conference, *Ibrahim* found means to get the better of the prepossessions of his friends, on account of *Abu Moslim's* youth; and, upon their return, they not only recognized him as governor of *Korasan*, but joined the standard he had erected there, in *Ibrahim's* name.

who defeats the califf's general.
 This conspiracy, tho it seems to have been wisely conducted, was not so secretly carried on, as not to come to the ears of *Merwan*, and of *Naser*, his governor of *Korasan*, who immediately drew together a body of cavalry, to crush *Abu Moslim*, and the conspiracy, before it arrived to a greater head. *Abu Moslim*, however, being joined by his guard, *Naser* received a total defeat; and *Abu Moslim*, for some time, remained sole master of *Korasan*. The first use that *Ibrahim's* party (though it seems to have been without consent of the principals) made of their victory, was to proclaim *Ibrahim* to be the lawful califf, by hereditary right, and to declare *Merwan* an usurper. They, at the same time, invited all the people of the neighbouring provinces to join *Ibrahim's* standard, which vast numbers of them did; so that the revolt now became very alarming to *Merwan*, who found himself beset on every side; for, by this time, the people of *Hems*, either from their native inconstancy, or because they had been excited by the house of *Abbas*, declared against *Merwan*. We are not here to forget, that when that territory submitted to him before, he pretended only to be protector of *Walia's* sons: but
Walia

Walid having left other sons, it is possible, they were dissatisfied with *Merwan's* taking upon him the sovereignty. Be this as it will, he marched with an army to reduce them; but, willing to do it by gentle methods, when he came to the city of *Hems*, and demanded them to open their gates, they readily admitted him, and three hundred of his men, who were immediately put to the sword; but he himself found means to escape, by the *Tadmora* gate, and he re-joined his troops. In a few days a battle ensued, in which *Merwan* was victorious; and, after killing a great number of the *Hamesians*, and crucifying six hundred of them who were principally concerned in the treachery practised against him.

While *Merwan* was employed in crushing this rebellion, the people of *Damascus*, in an insurrection, deposed the governor he left to command them, and renounced their allegiance to him; but *Merwan*, after making forced marches, regained his capital, and put the ringleaders of the insurrection to death. He had more difficulty with regard to *Solyman*, the son of *Hesham*, who not only refused to acknowledge his authority, but had always done his utmost to oppose it, and escaping to *Basra*, he was there recognized by the people, as their lawful califf. From *Basra* he moved to *Kinnisrin*, where his troops greatly increased, by numbers of the *Syrians*, who joined him. But *Solyman*, having now recovered the full possession of *Damascus*; marched against him with an army, and encountered him in a pitched battle, where he lost thirty thousand of his men; and was put to a total rout. He retired however to *Hems*, where nine hundred men, who had been devoted to his, and his father, the califf *Hesham's*, interest, swore an eternal fidelity to his person. With these, and the remains of the former army, he marched out of *Hems*, and lay in ambush in the mountains, through which *Merwan* must pass in his march to that city, to which he knew *Merwan* would pursue him. His design miscarried, but not till after an obstinate encounter, in which he was again defeated, and he was, once more, obliged to fly to *Hems*. Here *Solyman* gave the command of the place to his brother *Sayd*, and he himself fled to *Tadmora*. *Merwan* came up with his army, but, notwithstanding his most vigorous efforts, and battering the walls on *Hems* with incessant fury; the garrison held out against him for seven months, and bought their peace, by delivering into his hands *Sayd*, the brother of *Solyman*. The discontented, and the rebels against *Merwan's* government, had planned their measures so well, that *Cufa*, that seat of restlessness, and rebellion, declared against him, at the same time, under *Abdallah*. But all their measures were crushed, by the vigilance of *Merwan's* governor there; and *Abdallah* was obliged to take shelter amongst the rocks, and caves, of the country.

Hems declares against *Merwan*;

as does *Damascus*, which he reduce;

and defeats *Solyman*;

whose rebellion is suppressed.

Not-

Progress
of the
house of
Abbas,

under *Abu*
Moslim ;

his craft.

A rebel-
lion in
Mesopota-
mia.

Account
of the *Au-*
ritæ ;

who are
reduced
by *Mer-*
wan ;

who fa-
vours the
Christians

Notwithstanding all those successes of *Merwan*, and though he took great pains in appointing proper persons to be governors of his provinces : the rebellion against him, under the house of *Abbas*, continued still to rage, and to prosper. *Merwan*, indeed, obtained, in some places, advantages against them ; but those were more than counterbalanced, by the progress of the rebels. This seems to have reduced *Merwan* to oppressive practices ; for, we are told, that he stripped one Jew at *Hems*, of near three hundred thousand pounds, sterling. He could not, however, prevent *Abu Moslim*'s progress. That young commander received from his master, *Ibrahim*, two flags ; one a banner, which he styled, The shadow ; and the other, in the form of an imperial standard, which he called, The cloud. Though nothing could be more fantastical, than such a mystical piece of pageantry, yet the banners had a prodigious effect, in favour of *Ibrahim* ; the vulgar being taught by *Abu Moslim*, to believe, that they were emblems of the continuance of the califat, as long as the earth was covered by clouds, or exhibited a shade. This nonsense brought such a concourse of people under those standards, that neither *Merwan*, nor his generals durst take the field against *Abu Moslim*, who reduced all the fortresses in *Korasan*, and forced the califf's governors there to take an oath of fidelity to *Solyman*.

Matters continued in this state, which was so untowardly for the califf *Merwan*, till the 130th year of the Hejra, when *Dakhak*, the leader of the *Amritæ*, an Arab clan, settled in *Mesopotamia*, declared against him, and was joined in his rebellion, by several other great men, or princes, of that country. These *Amritæ* seem to have been of the true species of the wild *Arabs*, who, to this day, rove over the plains of *Asia*, and their name, in the Syrian language, signifies, "Free ;" which they are, in the most unlimited sense. Their custom was, in their expeditions, to disincumber themselves of their wives, families, and effects ; and, when their business was over, to return to them, or send for them. *Thebit*, a man of consequence, probably a partizan of the *Abbas* family, instigated *Dakhak* to this rebellion, and their rendezvous was near mount *Izla*, from whence they marched to *Telmasrita*, in the territory of *Hems* ; where their numerous forces were routed, by the califf's generals, with a slaughter of twelve thousand men.

Notwithstanding this advantage, the califf, *Merwan*, found himself so hard pressed by the house of *Abbas*, that he found himself unable to do any thing, more than barely maintain himself in *Syria*, during the remainder of this year. This, perhaps, was the reason, why he thought proper to take the Christians into his favour, as, at that time, they were powerful, and numerous, both in *Asia*, and in *Egypt*. By their own historians, who are seldom favourable to the memory of a califf, we are informed, that he

not

not only permitted the Christians of *Antioch*, to elect for themselves a patriarch, but enjoined his subjects to pay him a proper respect. He likewise ordered one *Abbas*, one of their greatest persecutors, to be suffocated in a sack of unslacked lime, under pretence of his being a magician, and his having a hand in the murder of *Walid II.* By this time *Meru* had been taken, by *Abu Moslim*, who, soon after divided his command with *Katiba*. But *Merwan's* general, *Nasr*, had now recruited his army, and having taken the field afresh, several bloody encounters happened between him and *Katiba*; in which *Nasr* lost thirty thousand men. *Katiba* then attacked *Banana*, another of *Merwan's* generals, at *Jurjan*, and defeated him in a pitched battle, wherein *Banana* himself was killed.

Constantine Copronimus, the *Greek* emperor, a brave and active prince, would not lose so fair an opportunity as of those distractions offered, of recovering the provinces that *Greeks* had been dismembered from his empire, by the Moslems. He therefore fell into *Syria*, and *Dulychia*, at the head of a strong army, and, about the same time, fitted out a fleet, against that of the *Arabs*. As to the success of the expedition by land, authors are silent, so that it probably ended in devastation, and plunder, without any thing decisive being done. But the *Greek* fleet attacked that of the Moslems, off the isle of *Cyprus*, with so much fury, that no more than three ships of the latter escaped.

The reader may have observed, that the oath, exacted by *Ibrahim Abu Moslim*, and the generals of the house of *Abbas*, from those they conquered, was in favour of the family of *He-sham*, but no particular person, or branch of it, was named. Nor does it appear that *Ibrahim*, as yet, had entered upon any act of sovereignty. This, probably, was the reason, why he made no scruple this year, which was the 131st of the *Hejra*, to set out, attended by his relations and friends, and a great retinue of servants, with thirty camels, with splendid trappings, in a pilgrimage to *Mecca*. This unusual cavalcade soon attracted the notice of the sharp-sighted *Arabs*, through whom he passed, who immediately sent notice of it to *Merwan*; and a party of horse was dispatched from *Damascus*, to seize *Ibrahim*. He was then passing by *Harran*, and, perceiving that he could not escape, he ordered his two brothers, *Abul Abbas*, and *Abu Jaafar*, and as many of his friends as could escape, to make the best of their way to *Cufa*, where their party was strong; which they accordingly did, and they lay there concealed for some time. As for *Ibrahim* himself, he fell into the hands of his enemies, who loaded him with irons, and threw him into prison; where he soon after expired; his pre-mort probably by poison. As he had, during his life-time, tensions in the most earnest manner, always recommended to his friends, the interest of his brother *Abul Abbas*, the same ther *Abul* whom his father named *Abdallah*, the partizans of the house *Abbas*.

of

of *Abbas*, the chief of whom knew where he was concealed, advanced to *Cufa*, and on the 132d year of the Hejra, he left his retirement, and went to his own palace at *Cufa*; where he received the compliments of his troops, who were most of them mounted on horseback, and drest in black. From his own palace he proceeded to that of the emperor, which was called the castle of *Cufa*, where his chief followers took the oath of allegiance to him.

who de-
feats *Mer-*
wan's go-
vernors of
Irak.

Abul Abbas, being thus declared califf, found himself carefully supported. *Katiba* was still in the field, with a powerful army, and defeated *Yezid*, *Merwan's* governor of *Irak*, in a pitched battle, but he was himself drowned in the pursuing the fugitives over the *Euphrates*. The pursuit was, however, continued with great slaughter, by *Hamid*, *Katiba's* son, who effectually dispersed the enemy, and returned, with his victorious army, to *Cufa*, where *Abul Abbas* declared *Abu Moslim* his first minister.

Merwan
himself is
totally
routed.

In the mean while, *Merwan* had advanced with his army to *Tubar*, not far from *Mawfel*, waiting the event of the operations of his army, under *Yezid*; the news of whose total defeat threw him into inexpressible consternation. He, however, soon recovered himself, and assembling his army, which is said to have consisted of three hundred thousand men, he gave battle to *Abdallah*, the uncle of *Abul Abbas*, and general of his army. But, during the first charge, *Merwan* being obliged to dismount, upon a necessary occasion, his horse taking fright, ran amongst the ranks of his army, and this producing a general belief that he was killed, his troops fell first into disorder, and then to flight; which all *Merwan's* endeavours could not remedy, so that he was totally defeated. A prodigious slaughter of his army ensued, and *Abdallah* remained master of the camp. As to *Merwan* himself, he made the best of his way, first to *Kinnisrin*, then to *Hems*, and from thence to *Damascus*. The people of that city had long hated him, because he had transferred the imperial treasury, from thence to *Haaran*; and now, finding him in such distress, they re-

he is pur-
sued into
Egypt.

fused to admit him. He was, therefore, obliged to fly to *Harran*, where, by means of a bridge, he escaped over the *Euphrates*, and, though he was all the way closely pursued by *Abdallah's* troops, he escaped into *Egypt*; where he was received by the governor set over that country, and for some time he kept his ground there. He was, however, attacked by *Saleh*, uncle of *Abul Abbas*, and several battles ensued between them. Here, we are told, though, perhaps upon no good authority, that he commenced tyrant, oppressing the Christians with great cruelty, and threatening to cut off the patriarch of *Alexandria's* head, with his own hand. But, finding himself hard pressed by *Saleh*, he passed the *Nile*, and burnt *Mesr*, then the chief town of *Egypt*, with all the magazines of corn, and provisions in it.

it. He next fortified himself in the city of *Geeza*, which was the antient *Memphis*. A Christian monastery happening to be in the neighbourhood, *Merwan* seized it into his own hands, and was brutal enough, to attempt the chastity of a beautiful nun. whom he found amongst the prisoners. To procure herself some respite, she pretended, that, if *Merwan* would give her leave, she would present him with an ointment that should render him invulnerable, or any one who should make use of it. She accordingly produced a box with some ointment, with which she rubbed her neck, and, with an assumed dauntless countenance, she desired the califf to try the efficacy of her ointment upon her. He was stupid enough to draw his sword, and, in making the experiment, struck off her head, which was all her aim. Soon after, he was by *Saleh*, some say, by *Addallah*, his brother, forced to retire to *Busir*, the antient *Thebais*, where he was put to death in a mosque, with a lance; his head being immediately cut off, was sent to the califf, *Abul Abbas*, who, with his uncle *Abdallah*, received it with the highest devotion, by performing public prayers, by way of thanksgiving; and distributing ten thousand dinars amongst the poor, for the happy event.

Merwan's death, undoubtedly, happened in the 132d year of the Hejra, and in him the califat of the house of *Ommiyah* was entirely extinguished. The Moslem authors, when they meet with a prince who was undoubtedly brave, if he retains any vestiges of humanity, are apt to extol his courage and clemency. That *Merwan* was brave, appears from every action of his life, and that he was cunning, from his elevation to the califat, in prejudice of so many other princes, who had a better right. But the truth is, his circumstances, as well as those of his competitors debarred him from his exercise of clemency, had it been in his nature. He reigned upwards of five years, if we count to the time of his death, and was killed when he was about sixty; an age not extremely consistent with his attack upon the nun. If we are, however, to believe the Moslem authorities, his personal constitution was very extraordinary; for we are told that he was a most enormous glutton, and that he never could see a sheep, without wrapping his hand in the corner of his vest, and tearing out the kidney, which he instantly devoured. Upon this he always called for a fresh habit, and he left behind him ten thousand greasy vests, upon that account. We ought, however, to be extremely cautious of believing a character, drawn by authors who are evidently prejudiced, as the Moslem authors generally are, against *Merwan*; and here his history regularly closes.

His character.

Abul Abbas, commonly called Al Saffah, or the prince of the blood, the first califf of the house of Abbas.

Abul Abbas declared califf.

THIS prince, though he is reported to have been very merciful, swam, in a manner, to the throne of the califfs in a sea of blood. His uncles, *Abdallah*, and *Shaleh*, as well as his other generals, were insatiable after the slaughter of the adherents of the house of *Ommiyah*. A prodigious number of them had been put to the sword, in the battle of *Tubar*, but many more in the pursuit; and whole cities, and provinces, were strewed with their dead bodies. Enthusiasm, as well as policy, concurred in this barbarity. The *Cufans*, and most of the people of the *Persian Irak*, thought they never could shed blood enough, to atone for that of *Hosein*; and had *Abul Abbas* himself appeared to have discouraged the slaughter, they would have looked upon him as an apostate.

His title disputed.

But, in fact, the great friends of the late revolution, seem to have been outwited by *Abul Abbas*. They had declared themselves in favour of the house of *Hesham*, and he had the address to make himself considered, as the head of that house; but *Abu Moslim*, who, considering his youth, was one of the most extraordinary men, that age or country ever produced, was of a contrary opinion, and thought, that the house of *Abu Taleb* had a preferable right. This seems, indeed, to have been the prevailing notion, amongst all the Moslems of that party, because, we do not find, that either the father, or the elder brother, of *Abul Abbas*, took upon themselves the califat. According to some historians, *Abul Abbas* put *Abu Moslim* to death, for a conspiracy, in favour of *Abu Taleb*: but this must be a mistake, because it is certain, that he lived to the next reign, when he was assassinated. *Abul Abbas*, however, seems not to have employed *Abu Moslim* during his reign, but suffered him to enjoy the revenues, pomp, and equipages, of a

He appoints governors of provinces.

sovereign, and almost independant prince. He conferred the government of *Armenia*, *Mesopotamia*, and *Aderbijan*, upon his brother *Abu Jaafar*; and his brother *Yahya* had that of *Mosul*. His uncle *David* governed *Hejaz*, and *Yaman*; and another of his uncles, *Isa*, *Basra*. *Mahomet*, the son of *Abdalraman*, had the government of *Persia*. *Abu Moslim* still retained that of *Korasan*, which, indeed; he held by a kind of independant authority. *Abdallah*, the califf's uncle, governed *Syrie*, and *Saleb*, his uncle, *Egypt*. Those particulars are mentioned, because they serve to give

us some idea of the means, by which the house of *Al Abbas* came to be established upon the throne of the califat. All those governors, excepting *Abu Moslim*, were of the califf's family; and few, besides the *Arabs*, and the *Cufans*, who, though they lay in the *Persian Irak*, were originally *Arabs*, entered much into the dispute, concerning the right of hereditary succession to the califat. By this means, therefore, the distant provinces of this vast empire, being governed by men of abilities, who were attached to the reigning califf, were all of them in his interest; or, more properly speaking, they considered his governors as their sovereigns. As to *Africa*, and *Spain*, we know little of it from the Moslem history, during this period. One *Thoaba*, a man of quality in *Arabia*, had been sent, by *Merwan*, to govern *Spain*; but he, soon dying, was succeeded by one *Yusef*, or *Joseph*. But this last commander, being far inferior, in point of abilities, to his predecessor, many civil commotions broke out in *Spain*, which occasioned a vast effusion of blood, amongst the Moslems there; but matters, at last, were compromised.

Affairs of
Spain.

It was remarkable, that the new califf affected black to be the colour of his own, and his followers habits; and he was inaugurated in that colour. Amongst the first acts of his califat, was his transferring the seat of empire, from *Damascus*, which was peopled by inconstant, ungrateful, inhabitants, to *Anbar*, in *Irak*, situate upon the *Euphrates*. This he did, because the citizens of *Damascus*, after refusing admittance to *Merwan*, the late califf, refused admittance likewise to him; till his general *Salah*, took it by assault, and suffered his soldiers to plunder it for three days, and put to death *Merwan's* governor. While *Abul Abbas* resided at *Anbar*, he heard of nothing but excessive cruelties, inflicted by his governors, upon the partizans of the house of *Ommiyah*, which reasons of state obliged him to connive at, contrary to his own natural inclination. His uncles, *Abdallah* particularly, was excessively cruel, in his government of *Damascus*. *Hesham*, son of the califf *Abdolmalik*, falling into his hands, he ordered him to be whipt till his body was laid bare to the bones; because *Abdallah's* father had told him, that *Hesham* had, without any cause, sentenced him to receive sixty lashes. This fact is sufficient to shew the coarse, barbarous, manner in which the Moslems of those days, who were at variance with one another, conducted themselves.

The califf
transfers
the seat of
the califat
to *Anbar*.

Cruelties
of his go-
vernors.

Notwithstanding all the severities practised against the house of *Ommiyah*, they still found means to give disturbance to the reigning califf. Great numbers of the *Syrians*, and *Chalcidenes*, who inhabited a district of *Syria*, in the first year of the califf's reign, took up arms to restore that house. But they were defeated in the neighbourhood of *Hems*, by the *Munrophi*; for so the califf's troops were denominated,

The house
of *Ommi-
yah* take
up arms.

by

by the *Greek* historians, on account of their wearing black. Other *Arabs*, who favoured the house of *Ommiyah*, rose in arms, about the same time; and, in contradistinction to the califf's troops, cloathed themselves in white. But they were suppressed by the califf's troops. They could not, however prevent an infinite number of other insurrections, which generally terminated in favour of the *Imanites*; for so the califf's party were denominated; as that of the house of *Ommiyah* was called the *Kaisites*: but the former were reckoned incomparably the better soldiers.

The califfat invaded by the *Greeks*.

According to the best accounts, those commotions were greatly encouraged by the partizans of the house of *Ommiyah*, believing that *Merwan* was still alive. In the mean while, *Constantine Copronymus*, taking advantage of the distractions of the califat, broke into *Armenia*, and took the cities of *Melitene*, *Theodocicpolis*, and *Jezira*. This, probably, was the reason, why a persecution was, at that time, set on foot against the Christians, great numbers of whom were most cruelly destroyed. An insurrection likewise happened in a part of *Mesopotamia*, called *Maiphereat*, which seems never to have submitted to the *Arab* dominion. The inhabitants of this place, under one *Cyrus Tebeth*, made so formidable a progress, though, it is very possible, they scarcely knew for what they took up arms, that the people of a neighbouring district, called *Phis*, took the alarm, and prepared to resist them; by chusing for their general one *John*, a *Syrian*. One of their countrymen, *Severus*, who deserted to the *Arabs*, was routed by *John*, with great slaughter; and he remained triumphant, for some time, against all opposition. These distractions were, this year, attended by a famine, all over *Mesopotamia*, and the adjacent provinces, occasioned by vast swarms of locusts. *Burika*, again, rebelled against the califf, and was joined by all the eastern part of *Mesopotamia*.

Burika rebels,

but is defeated.

This rebel, in a short while, grew very powerful, but was defeated at *Dara*, by the califf's troops. Some remains of the faction of the house of *Ommiyah* began to bestir themselves, about the same time, but they were defeated, and the califf appointed *John* of *Phis*, one of his head governors in those parts; as he did his own brother, and successor, *Abdallah*, who had defeated *Burika*, governor of *Mesopotamia*. Several other commotions happened in the same places, about the same time; but they are related with such darkness, and confusion, both of names, and places, that no dependance can be had upon them, all we know, is, that in the 136th year of the *Hejra*, which answers to the 758th year of *God*, the califf *Abdul Abbas*, the first of the house of *Abbas* died, at *Anbar*, in the thirty-third year of his age, of the small pox; and the fifth year of his reign.

Fresh commotions.

Death and

Abul Abbas, in his person, is said to have been handsome character and majestic, and notwithstanding the vast quantity of blood of *Abul* which he shed, he is said by *Moslem* authors, to have been *Abba*. humane and merciful. His munificence and generosity, are highly celebrated; and it is said, that he made a present of upwards of five hundred thousand pounds at one time, to the head of the house of *Abu Taleb*. His piety and humility, is likewise greatly celebrated; but we cannot from the constant tenor of his reign, pronounce, that the encomiums bestowed upon him are always just. He was the first *Kaliff*, who reigned by a first minister, and in this perhaps he was politic; because, he thereby averted from himself the unpopularity, which he must have contracted during the course of a bloody reign.

Abu Jaafer al Mansur, *second Califf of the house of Abbas.*

DURING the late reign, *Abu Jaafer* had been recognized, as presumptive heir to the *califat*, and had been by his brother *Abul Abbas*, appointed, to the high post of conductor of the caravans of the Pilgrims, in visiting *Mecca*, which had now become one of the chief places of the *Mansur*, Empire. He was conducting one of those caravans, when he received notice of his brother's death. The first step of his government, was to dispatch *Abu Moslem*, to *Cufa*, to suppress a conspiracy, formed there to raise his nephew *Isa*, who supposed to the *califat*. This conspiracy however, was soon suppressed, and *Al Mansur*, received his nephew's submission, and pardoned him upon condition, that he should ever after remain in a private station. *Al Mansur*, had many other difficulties to struggle with; for, not only his uncle *Abdallah*, the son of *Ali*, declared himself *califf*; but the Partizans of the house of *Ommiyah*, were every where in motion, throughout all *Syria*. *Al Mansur* and his generals, proved victorious over all opposition; and his uncle *Isa*, procured an association of all the members of the house of *Hesham*, to support him in the *califat*.

But the title of *Al Mansur*, seems in fact, to have been very questionable. The house of *Abu Taleb*, was certainly preferable in point of relationship to the prophet, to that of the house of *Abul Abbas*; and *Al Mansur's* uncle *Abdallah*, declared himself *califf*, at *Damascus*, which was no longer the seat of the *califat*, the late *Kaliff* having transferred it to *Orbar*. *Abdallah* founded his pretension, upon a promise that was made him, by the late *califf Abul Abbas*, that if he defeated *Merwan*, he should be raised to the *califat*. *Abdallah*, had great interest in the Empire, and raised a vast army out of *Arabia*, *Syria*

but is reduced.

History,

death and

character,

of *Abu Moslem*.

His vast riches and magnificence.

Syria and *Mesopotemia*; but *Al Mansur*, had on his side *Irak*, *Persia*, and *Korasan*; besides *Abu Moslem*, who was incomparably the best general of his age. This disputed title brought on a most bloody civil war, in which *Abu Moslem* proved victorious in the califf's right, and gave several defeats to *Abdallah*; whose camp he took, and made himself master of his baggage; but in other respects, used his success with great moderation. As to *Abdallah* himself, finding his affairs desperate he retired to *Basra*.

Abu Moslem, by this time became too great for a subject, or *Al Mansur* thought him so. His services to the house of *Al Abbas*, had been so important, that the califf, finding it impossible to repay them, resolved to cut him off. He continued still governor of *Korasan*, with a kind of an independent authority which had given great jealousy to *Al Mansur*, in his brother's life time. *Al Mansur*, had several times represented to the late califf, the danger of having in his empire so powerful a subject; but *Abul Abbas* refused to consent to put *Abu Moslem* to death, though he gratified his brother so far, as to deny him the post of conductor of the Pilgrims, to *Mecca*. This irritated *Abu Moslem*; and, to shew his disregard to the apparent heir, who obtained that post, he went along with the Pilgrims, and treated them most magnificently, at a vast expence; far beyond what even the califf, and *Al Mansur*, could afford. This display of riches and liberality, proved fatal to *Abu Moslem*. Tho' *Al Mansur*, upon his coming to the califat, was obliged to employ him against his uncle, *Abdallah*; yet, he secretly vowed his destruction, with the first opportunity. That he might have the better pretext to ruin him, he sent an officer to *Abu Moslem's* camp, to take an inventory of the spoil upon *Abdallah's* defeat; and this mark of distrust drew some reflections from *Abu Moslem*, no way to the advantage of the califf. Upon suppressing *Abdallah's* rebellion, he was ordered to march into *Syria* and *Egypt*; but instead of that, he continued in *Korasan*, where he lived in security, with all the pomp of a sovereign independent prince. His vast revenues, however were not expended merely upon the purposes of luxury. He dug wells, he repaired high roads, he beautified the country, he continued to make magnificent presents to the Pilgrims repairing to *Mecca*, to each of whom he gave a vest, and provided every thing that was necessary for their accommodation.

But *Abu Moslem*, had other demerits besides those of too much vanity and power, in the eyes of *Al Mansur*; he was not in his own heart, satisfied with his title to the califat, though he was the great instrument of raising the house of *Al Abbas* to that dignity. There is not perhaps, in all the Moslem history, any character so mysterious, as that of *Abu Moslem*. Though he was one of the greatest generals that

ever appeared in the East, he was not above one or two and twenty years of age, when his reputation was at the highest; his luxury was incredible, he is said to have had a thousand cooks, and then twelve thousand beasts of burden, were scarcely sufficient to transport the furniture of his kitchen; besides oxen and poultry, he consumed every day, a thousand sheep, and three thousand tarts. His wives were but three, and they were confined in a castle, to which no one had entrance but himself; receiving their food and necessaries through a window. 'Tis even said, that his delicacy, or rather his fanaticism, went so far, that when he sent for any of his wives, the beast on which she rode was killed, and the saddle burnt, to prevent any person from again riding upon the same. This, and many other singularities of character, in so young a man, would render the whole of his history suspected, were it not supported by indisputable authorities; but, the most extraordinary part of the whole is, that his origin is unknown, some looking upon him as an *Arab*, some as a *Korasan*, and others, as a *Curd* or *Tartar*. But whatever his extraction was, he was undoubtedly the most powerful subject the califf had, and if he had a failing, it was that of too much presumption upon his own merit and greatness. When the late califf died, he condoled with *Al Mansur*, upon the death of his brother, but did not felicitate him, upon his succession to the califat. *Al Mansur*, knew the meaning of so affrontive a behaviour; and immediately laid the scheme, for *Abu Moslem's* destruction. It was easy for the latter to see, that he was hated by the califf, and upon receiving an invitation, or an order to come to court, he held a consultation with some of his friends, at *Raya*, how he should behave. Presumption in him proved too strong for their advice, which was, to retire to *Korasan*; he went to court, with almost certain destruction before his eyes.

Al Mansur, unwilling to alarm him, received him at first with great affability and complacency; but upon his return next day, he upbraided him with some acts of disloyalty he had been guilty of, particularly, that of inserting his own name before his sovereign's, in certain public writings, and of having turned him into ridicule. *Abu Moslem*, saw that his fate was determined, and sought to evade it by submission. He implored the protection of his sovereign, and put him in mind of the services he had done; but all was to no purpose. He asked to be protected from his master's enemies, what greater enemy have I, replied the califf, than yourself, and upon this, clapping his hands, which was a signal concerted upon, four assassins, rushed out, and put an end to the life of the unhappy *Abu Moslem*, who is said to have destroyed six hundred thousand enemies, of the house *Abbas*.

The throne of the califf, was now established beyond the power of man to shake it. It is true, many flaws were in his title ; but the death of so great a general as *Abu Moslem*, left him nothing to fear. *Abu Moslem's* treasure, fell into the hands of one *Sinan*, a *Persian* magian, or an adorer of fire, who found means to muster up a hundred thousand men, at the head of whom, he declared against the califf; but he was defeated, by *Jambur*, *Al Mansur's* general, in the 137th year of the *Hejra*. It appears, that the immense treasure left by *Abu Moslem*, excited the califf to have so strict an eye over his general *Jambur*, that the latter rebelled. But *Al Mansur*, soon forced him to abandon *Raya*, and to retire to *Ispahan*, where he maintained his ground for some time, till *Mahomet*, and other of the califf's generals, marched against him at the head of a powerful army, and gave him a total defeat. It appears from the concurrent testimonies of Greek as well as Moslem historians, that the califf, about this time, grew excessively jealous of the Christians. *Theodorus* the Patriarch of *Antioch*, was accused of keeping up a secret correspondence with the *Greek* emperor; and was, for that reason, banished. The truth is, the Christian prelates, who were settled in the califf dominions, were excessively ignorant, and interfered too much, in temporal concerns. This drew upon them a kind of a persecution, and they were, by the califf's orders, prohibited, from either building or repairing their churches, and from performing in public, any acts of devotion; and *Al Mansur*, aggravated their sufferings, by obliging even their religious to pay, an additional tribute, the collecting of which he put into the hands of the *Jews*.

One *Yusef*, continued all this time to be the califf's governor of *Spain*, but a prince of the house of *Ommiyah*, called *Abdalranman*, appearing there, about the 139th year of the *Hejra*, or rather sooner, declared himself califf. *Al Mansur*, was at this time at war with the emperor of the *Greeks*, and *Salem*, one of his generals, had, at the head of eighty thousand men, made an unsuccessful irruption into *Capadocia*. This, together with other intestine troubles, prevented *Al Mansur* from attempting to reduce *Abdabraham*, who was the founder of a dynasty of monarchs in *Spain*.

In the 140th year of *Hejra*, which answers to the year of God 757, the rebellion of the *Rawandions* broke out. *Rawand* was the author of this sect, with some very particular tenets, such as that of the metempsychosis, or the transmigration of souls. This opinion, had been early imported into the eastern countries, by *Pythagoras*, and had always found some Abettors; but the principles of it not being well understood, it had degenerated into such impiety, that the *Rawandians*, made it, in a manner, optional to the califf, either for him to be adored, as a Deity, or to be put to death. Their founder, *Rawand*, had the merit of being amongst

amongst the first, who took arms in favour of the house of *Abbas*; but their extravagancies having drawn upon them the resentment of *Abu Moslem*; they were, during that general's life, persecuted and suppressed. But he being put to death, *Abdallah*, the son of *Rawand*, drawing together, a great number of his followers, in the city of *Hashemiyah*, where the califf then resided, made a kind of a procession round his palace, in the same manner as the Moslem Pilgrims did round the *Caaba*. The califf, resenting this idolatry, imprisoned a hundred of their chiefs; but the new sect, being very powerful and numerous, soon found means to release them; and once more assembling, they attacked the califf's palace, with a determined resolution, to destroy him. Finding himself thus beset unawares, he put himself at the head of a few followers, determined to sell his life as dear as he could; and he certainly had been killed by the Enthusiasts, had he not been rescued by one *Maan*, the son of *Zaidal*. This person, having been of the *Ommiyah* faction, was at that time obliged to lurk about *Hashemiyah*; but, detesting the *Rawandians*, more than he hated the califf, he appeared at the head of a body of his friends, and when the califf was upon the point of sinking, under the power of his enemies, he rescued him, by cutting upwards of six thousand of them in pieces, and giving them an entire defeat. This dangerous rebellion however, made the califf think of changing the seat of his government, and of laying the foundations of a new city, which was afterwards called, *Bagdad*, so famous in the eastern history.

who attempt to assassinate the califf.

He thinks of founding *Bagdad*.

But this expedient, was far from immediately answering the califf's ends. The *Rawandians*, continued to molest the quiet of his empire, and arrived at such a height of Enthusiasm, as to be guilty of the most frantic actions. Some of them, we are told, threw themselves from the tops of high towers, in hopes of flying thereby to heaven. It was in vain for the califf, to put to death as many of them as fell in his hands, and his hatred of them, seems to have extended to the Christians, nor indeed is it at all impossible, that some Christians might be infatuated enough to be infected with their Enthusiasm, as the ecclesiastical history of those days, mentions such a sect amongst the Egyptian Christians. We are told, that about this time the Christians were deprived of the liberty of writing out the public accounts of the califf's tributes, which was a privilege they had always enjoyed, and to which none of the other subjects of the califf were equal. This is a point of history not easily reconcileable to that acuteness and dexterity of writing, for which the *Arabs* were then eminent; were it not known, that about this time the *Indian* numeral figures began to be introduced into *Arabia*, by the Christian merchants from *Armenia* and *Egypt*; and it was, no doubt, the quickness of the calculations by those numerals that fitted the Christians for

Madness of the *Rawandians*,

The Christians persecuted

this employment. For, we are told, that after it was taken from them, the *Moslems* were obliged to replace them in it, because none of the califfs were qualified for it. The ridiculous disputes amongst the Christians concerning the time of celebrating *Easter*, was now at their height, and no doubt, contributed to the persecutions they underwent, and to the contempt as well as hatred, the califf had for them.

Care of
Al Mansur
in appoint
ing gover
nor.

His fo-
reign wars,

Affairs
with *Spain*.

Success of
Abdallah
man there.

Al Mansur, seems to have been particularly careful with regard to his appointing governors; and observed, that excellent piece of policy, never to suffer a governor to reside too long in one province. In the 140th year of the Hejra, he removed his own uncle *Salah*, from the government of *Egypt*, and substituted in his room *Abdalmalec*, the son of *Yezed*; but he too was removed in two years after, to make way for *Musu* the son of *Caab*; who was succeeded by *Mahomet*, the son of *Asad*. Those precautions were highly necessary, in a country which could produce so many recent instances of the dangers arising from too long a continuance in power in one government; especially, as the califf was beset by other enemies. For, in the 141st year of the Hejra, there was a sharp war, between the *Greek* emperor and the califf, throughout several places of both empires. In *Armenia*, the Imperialists were headed by one *Paulus*, and a formidable rebellion, broke out in *Syria*, under one *Theodorus*. The califf's troops, however, proved victorious in both places, and the Imperialists, as well as the rebels, were subdued with great slaughter. But the califf *Al Mansur*, was not so fortunate in *Spain*, where *Abdalrahman*, whom we have already mentioned, continued to make great progress. He was now in possession of *Malaga*, *Seville*, and other places of the greatest consequence in that country, though *Yusef* still continued to oppose him. We do not however find, that even *Yusef* acted under the califf's authority; however convenient it might have been to his affairs. *Abdalrahman*'s rendezvous was at *Seville*, where he put himself at the head of a large body of *Spanish Arabs*, and engaged *Yusef* at *Corduba*, and after defeating him entirely, pursued him to *Teledo*, where *Yusef* was killed. *Abdalrahman*, after this, besieged and took several places, particularly *Valencia*. The Christians of *Spain*, who, as has been already observed, had lived unmolested under the house of *Ommyah*, and its generals, seem to have opposed the progress of *Abdalrahman*; but he no sooner had conquered *Yusef*, than he put them to the sword, or carried them to captivity in great numbers. After this, he affected to treat all who opposed him in *Spain*, as rebels. Such was the fate of *Tirat Beye*, and some other *Arab* generals, who pretended to check his progress, and whose forces he defeated in the field, or executed in the way of justice, as being taken in rebellion; in short, he at last made himself master of all *Spain*, almost without a rival, excepting the inconsiderable territory, held by the descend-

ants

ants of *Pelagius* in *Asturia*, which *Abdalrahman*, either suffered them to possess, or did not think worthy the conquering.

The year of the Hejra 143d, was disturbed once more, by the *Rawandians*, who seem to have been spirited up thereto by the house of *Abu Taleb*, particularly in the neighbourhood of *Basra*. The califf, according to his usual policy, this year appointed *Hamid*, to the government of *Egypt*, in the room of *Mahomet* the son of *Asad*; but *Hamid* himself in a few months was removed, to make way for *Yezid* the son of *Hatem*. Those removals were perhaps necessary, as the califf had now certain intelligence, that the descendants of *Hasan*, and the house of *Abu Taleb*, had entered into a conspiracy to dethrone him. *Mahomet* and *Ibrahim*, the sons of *Abballah*, the son of *Hasan*, were at the head of this conspiracy; in which many of the principal subjects of the empire were involved. But, the califf, by his arts, found means to get into his power, *Abdallah*, the son of *Hasan*, whom he put to death, being unable to discover where his sons were. In the same manner he detected all the descendants of the house of *Ali*, to the number, as is said, of twelve, who fell into his hands. Being apprehensive of their being delivered by their party, he carried them about with him in chains wherever he went, and at last to *Cufa*; where he most barbarously shut them up, in a prison, where they were confined without being able to sit down, and at last suffocated to death, by the stench issuing from their own bodies.

New commotions.

Removals and conspiracies.

Severity of the califf to the house of *Abu Taleb*.

It cannot be denied, that *Al Mansur* was a most consummate politician, and at the same time a great warrior. He likewise had many good qualities which he exerted very amiably, when they did not interfere with his ambition. But he was thoroughly sensible of the disadvantages he lay under, both from the defects of his title, and from the inconstancy of his subjects, particularly the *Cufans*; who were perpetual thorns in his side. Not contented with taking all opportunities of rebelling themselves, they were perpetually debauching his troops from their duty, and by their situation, they were enabled often, both to shelter his enemies and to bid him defiance. Such, amongst many others, were the reasons that determined *Al Mansur* to pursue his scheme of erecting a new seat of empire, which should be more central than any other, for the well affected parts of his empire, and better situated for crushing all attempts against him. With this view, he fixed upon a spot, near the confluence of the *Tygris*, the *Sorat*, and the *Euphrates*, equally distant from *Basra*, *Cufa*, *Mousel*, and *Sawada*, with the conveniency of many water carriages, for supplying it with plenty of provisions. Many ridiculous stories, are told concerning the foundations of this new city, afterwards the famous *Bagdad*. The superstition of the *Arabs* has been

Jealousy of the califf.

His reasons for *Bagdad*.

His poli-
cy.

already noted; and however, *Al Mansur*, might despise it in his heart, some observances were perhaps necessary to be kept up by a prince, in his situation. To give his subjects the better opinion of his new foundation, he went through all the ceremonies of casting a horoscope, and his astrologers encouraged him to proceed upon the favourable aspect presented by the heavens. Some dispute has arisen, amongst the Moslem authors, concerning the original of the word *Bagdad*, which most probably, was owing to an Ido', called *Bagh*; which in the times of idolatry, had a chapel erected there. Some have been of opinion, that it was built upon the same spot, where the antient *Babylon* stood; but that opinion seems very justly questionable; because, a spot, which lies considerably North of *Bagdad*, exhibits ruins, which agree much better, with the situation of Old *Babylon*. Be that as it will, it is certain, that the situation pitched upon by *Al Mansur*, for the new seat of his empire, was the most beautiful, as well as convenient, that can possibly be imagined. *Al Mansur*, well knowing the force of prepossession and habit, in favour of antient cities, and native places of abode, omitted no art to give his subjects favourable impressions of his new undertaking. Understanding, that the old chapel of *Bagh*, had been converted into a cell, where resided a venerable Hermit, who was consulted next to an Oracle; one of the califf's principal officers took care to inform this Hermit, of his master's intention. The hermit's answer was, that according to a constant and prevailing tradition, a city was to be erected on that spot, by one *Moclas*, a name which had no affinity with that of the califf. The officer, making his report in public to *Al Mansur* of this conversation; the latter, in sight of all his army, immediately alighted from his horse, and gave God solemn thanks, for the relation that had been communicated to him. The bystanders wondering, what relation he could find out between his own name and that of *Moclas*, he informed them, that when he was very young, he and his brothers being terribly distressed for want of victuals, he had stolen one of his nurses bracelets, and converted it into money, to supply their wants; and that his nurse discovering the theft had called him *Moclas*, at that time the name of a famous *Persian* robber.

Account
of the si-
tuation
and build-
ing of that
city.

This notable discovery, gave vast alacrity to the califf's subjects, and they instantly set about building the city, upon the western banks of the *Tygris*. The undertaking however, was so extremely disagreeable to the *Persians*, that the workmen being often interrupted by them, that califf ordered his son *Al Modi*, to take post with a body of troops on the eastern side of the river, to which he intended, to extend his new city. Both father and son however, for several years after the foundations of it were laid, found prodigious difficulty in completing their undertaking. The califf's

califf's design, which no doubt gave rise to the interruption he met with from the *Persians*, was to have demolished *Madayen*, once the capital of *Persia*, and one of the most superb cities in the world; but he found this design, to be not only unpopular, but impracticable. The walls and public buildings of *Madayen*, were so solidly built, that the materials of them, could not without an immense expence, be carried to *Bagdad*; and many of them, the most valuable, could not at any rate be removed. But few works could be too difficult for a prince of the califf's prodigious power and riches. At the expence of about three hundred thousand pounds of *English* money, he compleated that part of the city that lay upon the western bank of the *Tygris*, and which was of a semicircular form. That part which lay upon the eastern bank, went more slowly on, and with greater difficulty, and indeed, it could not be said to be compleated, till the califat of *AlModi*; but, notwithstanding all that has been said on this occasion, by Moslem authors, it is plain, they discover great ignorance and misinformation, in their accounts. *Bagdad*, was certainly situated upon part of the ruins of the antient *Seleucia*; but this particular, seems to have been suppressed, by the barbarous manner in which the *Persians*, *Arahs*, and indeed, all the eastern nations, corrupted, or changed all the names of antiquity. It cannot, however be denied, that the plan of *Bagdad*, and the manner in which it was afterwards finished, was one of the noblest that ever was formed. A bridge that run across the *Tygris*, joined the two cities, the eastern and western, and in the middle of it was a citadel; but both of them were surrounded with strong walls, and each adorned by a beautiful palace of prodigious magnificence. In all other respects, *Bagdad* and Constantinople had accommodations suitable to the capital of the greatest empire in the world, and in a short time, it became the seat of the literature, as well as the power, of the east.

The most powerful competitor for the califat, that *Al Mahomet Mansur* had, was *Mahomet*, whom we have already mentioned to have been descended from *Hasan*, the eldest son of *Ali Abu Taleb*. As his pretensions were extremely popular, the califf not being able to lay hold of him, ordered the head of another *Mahomet* to be cut off and exposed for his, to discourage his followers. We know however, of no great success, attending this stratagem; for, *Mahomet Abdallah*, while *Al Mansur* was intent upon building *Bagdad*, appeared in person, and was proclaimed califf, at *Medina*. It was not long before he was at the head of one hundred thousand men. *Al Mansur* ordered, one of his generals, *Isa*, to march against him; and *Mahomet's* troops, being composed of a mutinous, inconsiderate rabble, soon dispersed themselves, all but a handful, with whom he took refuge in the ditch, that had been drawn by the prophet, around that city. But neither

but is
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A new re-
bellion
breaks
out,

but is
quelled.

Policy of
Almansur
in settling
the succe-
sion.

neither the strength, nor the security of the place, could defend them from *Isa's* troops; and *Mahomet's* little army being reduced to three hundred men, he himself was killed, and *Medina* taken by *Isa*. His head was immediately cut off by that general, and sent to the califf, who, receiving it as the most welcome present that could have been made him, ordered it to be carried in procession, through the principal parts of his dominions.

No sooner was this rebellion quelled, than another broke out, under *Ibrahim*, brother to *Mahomet*; who declared himself califf at *Basra*. His progress was more formidable than that of his brother, because he was acknowledged, not only by that powerful city, but by a great part of the *Persian* Irak. *Isa*, who, we understand, was nephew, to *Al Mansur*, advanced against this new pretender, at the head of thirty thousand troops, who had been employed in suppressing the late insurrection, and in a decisive battle he put an end not only to *Ibrahim's* life, but to all the hopes of his party. His head, as his brother's had been, was cut off and sent to the califf. Those intestine commotions encouraged the *Turks*, to make an irruption into *Armenia*, which, with great difficulty, was repelled by the califf.

The great importance of *Isa's* services, and his near relation to the califf; but above all, the prodigality of *Al Modi*, *Al Mansur's* eldest son, made the chief men about court, throw their eyes upon *Isa*, as a proper successor to the califf. *Al Modi*, had many good qualities, which makes it reasonable to think, that the faction formed against him on this occasion, sprung from the fear, that the public had, lest his prodigality should lead him to oppressive measures, in order to supply it. We cannot, however fairly presume, that a proposal of this kind could be very agreeable to *Al Mansur*, though it is extremely probable, that, as *Isa* was at the head of his army, which had preserved him on the throne, he was too politic to betray any reluctance to it. We are told, he was, on this occasion, guilty of a piece of management highly unworthy of a man, or a prince. For it is said, that *Isa*, being distracted with a meagrim and vertigo, he bribed the physician who attended him, to give him a powder, or medicine, which deprived him of his senses, during the time of the election, and that the chief courtiers, upon this, consented, that the succession should be settled upon *Al Modi*; but that after his death, *Isa* should have the reversionary right to it.

He de-
stroy his
uncle *Ab-*
dallah.

It must be acknowledged, that *Al Mansur*, with all his excellent qualities, was cruel and bloody, in every thing that affected his right, or that of his family, to the califat. His uncle, *Abdallah*, the same who had been defeated by *Abu Moslem*, incurred his displeasure, by the attempt which he had made to get himself declared califf, and he had ever since

the

the miscarriage of that attempt, remained in obscurity, at *Basra*, with his brother, *Solyman*; but his behaviour had been so inoffensive, that the califf could find no pretext to put him to death, and thought it would be impolitic to make use of violence against so near a relation. It is therefore said, that the califf, having made him a solemn promise of safety, decoyed him from *Basra* to *Bagdad*, where, by his contrivance and order, he was lodged in a house, the foundations of which were so loose, that the roof fell upon *Abdallah*, and crushed him to death. This story, as told by the Moslem historians, is filled with improbabilities; but, the substance of it seems to be true.

All *Al Mansur's* precautions could not, however, ensure the peace of his dominions. Many rebellions, of which we have few or no particulars, broke out in his empire, and as they generally drew upon him an invasion, from the *Greek* emperor, the Christians seldom failed to feel some effects of the califf's resentment. He, even, about this time, suppressed some of their most harmless privileges; for we are told, that he ordered all the crosses to be taken from the roofs of their churches, and prohibited them, from either meeting by night, or giving their children a liberal education, or even teaching them to read. All those were measures of severity that suited well with a jealous, cautious prince. He knew that the taking the crosses would be agreeable to his zealous *Moslem* subjects, who abhorred them as objects of idolatry. Their nightly meetings might give them opportunities of entering into measures against his government, and the advantages they received from their education, rendered them too considerable in his empire. The truth is, when we consider *Al Mansur's* situation, and the prepossessions of his subjects, we ought not to be greatly surprised at the hardships inflicted upon the Christians, whose religion and manners, gave them in many respects great advantages over the strict profession of Mahometanism. Manufactures, arts and learning, were yet in their infancy amongst the Moslems; and *Al Mansur*, by building *Bagdad* and by the other public works, he was carrying on in his empire, was endeavouring to introduce them. As to commerce, the great enricher of a state, it was, almost, entirely, in the hands of Christians, or Jews, whose manners were in many respects, more agreeable, than those of the Christians were, to the Moslems. They had the same common aversion for images, and the madness of the Christians, in favour of image worship, rendered them equally the aversion of both. The *Manichees* in particular, who had settled in *Harran*, and *Mesopotamia*, had rendered themselves obnoxious, by their many impieties and superstitions; and had drawn upon themselves severe chastisements from *Al Abbas*, and other governors under the califf, in which undoubtedly, the more sober professors of christianity, were involved.

The
Christians
severely
treated.

The rea-
sons why.

Notwithstanding

Notwithstanding this, the Christian writers, with all their severity upon the memory of *Al Mansur*, have not been able, if we consider the scandalous lives of the Christians of that age, and those countries, to produce, excepting in the cases we have mentioned, any shocking instances of a severe and general persecution.

An account of the famous *Hanifa*.

Such a cruelty would have been foreign to the principles of his government, which, for many years before his death, had been reduced to a state of tranquillity, and he endeavoured to improve it, by cultivating the arts of peace, by laying the foundation for seminaries of learning, in *Bagdad*, for the Moslems, which he endued with most magnificent appointments, and by inviting men of genius, and literature, from all countries, to reside at his court. Such was the state of *Al Mansur's* government, in the 150th year of the *Hejra*, which answers to the year of God 767. This year is distinguished by the death of the celebrated *Abu Hanifa*, in the 132d year of his age. He was one of the most extraordinary men that ever was amongst the *Moslems*; for he was more of a philosopher than an enthusiast. His self-denial went so far, that he died in prison, at *Bagdad*, into which he was thrown, because he refused to accept the office of *cadi*, or chief judge, for which he said he was not fit. He was the founder of a sect which after him was called, the *Haniftes*, who are denominated to be the followers of reason, in contradiction to other three sects, who are termed the followers of tradition; and his principles in a short time, came greatly into vogue.

The califf employs *George* a Christian physician, who cures him. Remarkable story of him.

Next year the califf falling into some bodily indispositions, particularly the loss of appetite, invited to his court a Christian physician, one *George*, who was attended by a pupil called *Isa*. This *George*, to all the charms of a polite address, added a graceful person, and a great knowledge in the languages, the *Arabic*. and the *Persian* in particular. Those distinguishing qualities preposessed the califf in his favour, and, he not only loaded him with his caresses, but gave him sumptuous habits, and magnificent apartments in his palace. *George*, approved himself worthy of those distinctions; for, he not only cured the califf of his illness, but continued to charm him by his conversation. One day, *Al Mansur* understood from *George*, that he was married to an old infirm woman, upon which, the califf, ordered *Salem*, one of his officers, to carry to *George's* apartment, three beautiful *Greek* slaves, with a present of about two thousand pound, sterling. *Salem*, not finding *George* at home left the slaves, and the money, with *Isa*; but *George*, no sooner returned, than sending the slaves back to the califf; he gave him to understand, that being a Christian, it was unlawful for him, to have any commerce with womankind, but his own wife. As we can scarcely suspect that the califf was so ignorant as not to know the Christian institution as to marriage,

marriage it is more than probable, that he sent this present in order to try the virtue, and the resolution of his physician. For we are told, that after this incident, *Al Mansur* took *George* into greater favour than ever. *George* however, fell indisposed in his turn, and thinking possibly, that his native air would do him good; he petitioned the califf for leave, to revisit his wife and family, and to lay his bones in his own country. The califf was very earnest with *George* to remain with him, and to entitle himself to paradise, by turning *Moslem*. But *George* answered with some peevishness, that he was determined to be buried with his ancestors, and to go to them, whether it was to go to heaven, or to hell. The califf remonstrated upon the danger his health might be in, if *George* should leave him; but the latter agreeing, that *Isa* should succeed him, in his post of physician, to the emperor of the faithful; *Al Mansur*, not only permitted *George* to return home, but made him a present at parting of near seven thousand pound, sterling, and ordered him to be taken care of upon the road, and that his body should be carried to his friends, in case he should die. With regard to *Isa*, *George's* successor, he had his master's learning, but not his virtues. For he made use of the great credit he had with the califf, in fleecing the people; and in particular, in making exorbitant demands, upon the Christian prelates, whose churches were very rich, a circumstance, of which we must observe, could not have happened, had they been immoderately persecuted by *Al Mansur*. *Isa*, was weak and insolent enough, during a tour which he made with the califf to *Nessibis*, to demand of the Christian bishop there, a large quantity of his church plate, putting him in mind at the same time of the danger of provoking by his refusal, a person, who was not only in high favour with the califf, but had under his care, the absolute government of his health and constitution. The bishop, provoked by this insult, very wisely shewed this letter first to *Al Rabi*, the califf's chamberlain, and then to the califf himself, who resented it, by ordering *Isa* to be stript of his preferment and riches; and after being soundly bastinadoed, to be turned out of his palace. We have mentioned this incident more particularly, as it was an act of justice, nay, of courage; worthy of a wise, and magnanimous prince.

He returns home.

The insolence and punishment of his successor, *Isa*.

In the 151st year of the Hejra, the califf, either provoked, by the inroad of the *Greeks*, or from motives of ambition and jealousy, sent three armies to invade the *Greek* territories, under the command of his brother *Al Abbas*, and other two generals, *Hasan*, and *Asad*. At the same time, he himself assembled an army of eighty thousand men, in the neighbourhood of *Bsra*, and invaded the northern part of the *Greek*, or as it is called in the histories of those days, the *Roman Empire*; but though we are told he besieged for a whole

The califf invades the *Greek* territories but without success.

Banaka
defeats
the *Greeks*.

Confusion
to histo-
rians.

Shameful
division a-

whole summer a fort called *Kamakb*, he was obliged to abandon his undertaking with a vast loss, both of his troops, and of his reputation, and his three generals had no better success. But as we have this account chiefly from the *Greek* writers, it is not entirely to be depended upon. It seems more probable, that those expeditions were undertaken to repel the invasions of the *Greeks* at this time; for, it is certain that they had made many inroads upon the califf's territories. Amongst other places of strength added by the califf to his empire, was the fortress *Arsamosata*, near the river *Arsanias*, which having fallen into decay, he now either repaired or rebuilt. This fortress is mentioned by *Ptolemy*, and by *Pliny*, is said to have been situated near the *Euphrates*. But the work was interrupted, by a body of *Imperialists*, who at first beat off the workmen, and demolished all they had built; the califf however found means afterwards to finish it. Soon after *Banaka*, a famous *Moslem* general of those days, in revenge of the inroads, which the *Imperialists* had made, upon the califat, invaded *Isauria*, and committed most dreadful depredations upon the imperial territories; carrying off a vast number of captives, and a great deal of plunder. Having besieged the fortress of *Syce*, the siege was attempted to be raised by a powerful armament, fitted out both by sea and land, under *Michael*, *Manes*, and *Bardanes*, three imperial generals; but they were defeated by *Banaka*, with great slaughter: though he was not able to carry the place, and was obliged to return home without any farther progress. The califf's arms, however was more fortunate towards the *Caspian* sea, where we are told, that one of his generals called *Yeid*, obliged the *Tartars*, or *Sythians* to pay a capitation tax to his master. But in fact, those inroads were so very numerous, and are so confusedly related by historians, that it is almost impossible to keep sight of them with any certainty. The *Greek* and the *Moslem* historians, often give different names to the same man, and to the same place, which creates an inexpressible confusion of facts. What we chiefly learn is, that those who are called the *Moslem*, or the imperial generals, were in fact no other, than the head of free booting parties, who robbed one another's territories on all occasions, and in all quarters. Of these, one *Barinar*, a *Moslem* partizan, invaded the imperial territories of *Cilicia*, and gave a defeat to the inhabitants of *Mopsuestia*, a city that takes its name from its situation at the mouth of the river *Mopsus*, which rises in the lower *Armenia*, and is mentioned by *Ptolemy*; they endeavoured to prevent his retreat; but he defeated them, with the loss of a thousand men, and returned home with five hundred prisoners.

The bickerings of the Christian clergy amongst themselves, are equally confused, and equally misrepresented; but

but in general we know, that towards the end of this califf's reign, they came to be so outrageous, that in order to pre-serve the peace of his empire, he was obliged to have recourse to severe methods. The patriarch *George*, had for some time governed the clergy of *Syria*, and had under him, a number of Suffragan bishops; but he being chosen during a schism, he proceeded so severely against his inferiors, that a complaint was brought against him before the califf, who ordered him to be put in irons, and to chuse for their patriarch, *David*, bishop of *Dara*, who, though a man of wisdom and piety, could not put a stop to the schism; which continued to rage as fiercely as ever. A complaint, about the same time, was preferred against *Theodorus*, the patriarch of *Antioch*, for carrying on an unlawful correspondence with the califf's enemies. What the proofs of this allegation were, we know not. But the califf certainly held him for guilty; for he was not only banished, but a more severe persecution was set on foot against the Christians, than any they had yet undergone. They were forbidden to build, or even to repair churches, to expose the crossier public, or to enter upon religious disputes. The califf, having this year gone to *Jerusalem*, to keep the fast of *Ramadan*, was minutely informed, by his governors, of the danger the tranquillity of his empire was in, from the fierceness, and divisions of the Christians; and though we do not find that he put any of them to death, yet it is certain, that he obliged great numbers of them to leave his territories, and to retire into those of the *Greek* emperor. Those severities were encreased on the part of the califf's governors, by the great load of dead riches in money, chalices, and other plate, great part of which was adorned with jewels, that as has been already observed, was deposited in the Christian churches of the east. *Musa*, the califf's governor of *Mosul*, where the divisions of the Christians ran the highest, and where their manners were most profligate, was particularly severe against them, tho' still we do not find, that any of them were put to death, merely on account of their religion.

which
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verities up-
on the
Christians

Jaafer, one of the califf's sons, happening about this time to be in the neighbourhood of *Mosul*, and I should be inclinable to believe his successor in that government, was applied to by one *Zoaras*. This man was a Monk of the convent of St. *Matthew* there, but so inveterate against the majority of his brethren, with whom he differed in matters of religion, that he informed *Jaafer*, that his brethren, the Monks, had concealed in their convent, a vast treasure which had belonged to the former califfs, particularly to *Hesham*, and *Merwan*, who had deposited it in their hands. This information, was far from being unlikely to be true. The *Moslems* in general had hitherto preserved, a profound regard for the sanctity of religious houses; nor do we find, that they had ever been ransacked by the califf's, during the

The con-
vent of St.
Matthew
spoiled of
riches,

most

most difficult times of their government. *Jaafar*, believed the information, and not only sent a party, who, stripped that convent, of all the riches lodged there; but issued an edict commanding all the Christians within his government to send him particular inventories of the wealth of their churches and religious houses. It is however, to the honour of the califf's government, that we are told, that this prince dying soon after, his edict was suppressed; and the convent of *St. Mathew*, was reinstated in all the wealth which had been carried from it.

Power of Christian patriarchs. We cannot, in this place help remarking, that from some circumstances it appears, as if the Christian patriarchs of *Syria*, exercised about this time, a kind of a civil authority over their inferior clergy. For, we are told, another Monk of *Mosul*, having first turned Mahometan, and afterwards returned to Christianity, set up for a prophet, and amongst many other extravagancies, though he was only in deacon's orders, exercised the function of a presbyterian bishop; and even took possession of the episcopal chair at *Dara*. The bishop of that place, having brought his complaints before *David* the patriarch, the latter examined into them, and finding, that the impostor by his arts, and impudence, had collected a great deal of treasure amongst the credulous Christians, he sent him prisoner to *Haran*, where he confined him. But whatever regard the califf might have had for particular prelates of moderation and wisdom, amongst the Christians, it is certain that he was now so much provoked at their irregularities, and animosities, that he proceeded with great severity in collecting the tributes that had been imposed upon him, all over *Mesopotamia*, *Syria*, and *Armenia*, and such of them as were unable to pay, were obliged either to leave the califf's dominions; or, to wear about their persons, a particular brand of distinction.

Public works of the califf. The califf seems to have remained for upwards of a twelve month at *Jerusalem*, from whence he did not return till the 156th year of the Hejral; during this time, the fortifications of *Callinicum* were repaired by his order, as were those of *Akula*, and vast numbers of other cities were during his reign, put into a posture of defence. We do not however find, that he was able to recover the authority of the califat, either in *Africa*, or *Spain*, in which last country, the power of *Abdalrahman*, was now established, and he had built a most magnificent mosque at *Corduba*. This year was likewise disturbed, by an irruption into *Mesopotamia*, of certain wild *Arabs*, who never had properly recognized the califf's authority, and who seem, by the great drought, which prevailed that year, to have been forced to leave their own country, with their families, and flocks of all kinds; and we are told, they made themselves masters of several districts both in *Syria*, and *Mesopotamia*. But though it has not been expressly marked by historians, the califf, seems to have been

Irruption of the wild *Arabs* into his dominions.

been very intent ever since he laid the foundations of *Bagdad*, upon peopling his dominions: perhaps in a great measure to repair the waste of people, which they had suffered, through the expulsion of the Christians. Amongst other foreign troops, which he had in his pay; we are told of *Suidians*, who are no other than *Indians* inhabiting about the *Ganges*, *Alans*, *Medes*, *Akulites*, *Hazars*, and *Turks*; all, or most of whom, with many other people, bordering upon *Ethiopia*, were now converted to Mahometanism, and many of them zealous in that faith, so that they were very proper subjects for the califf. We are likewise to observe, that most of those nations, being not so much used, as the *Syrians*, *Egyptians*, *Persians*, and some of the *Arabs* were, to social life, and the improvement of territory, were incorporated in the califf's armies; and we are told, that about this time, the *Arabs* learned so much of the *Turkish* discipline, that when they encountered their enemies, they did it with a mighty shout, to strike them with the greater terror. It cannot be denied that *Al Mansur*'s love of money, encreased with his years, and the oppressive methods he took to encrease the immense sums, he had already in his treasury, obliged his governors, and officers under him to the like. In *Mesopotamia*, *Persia*, and many parts of *Syria*, even the repositories of the dead, were broken up and plundered to gratify this insatiable passion.

His dominions peopled.

His avarice.

Hej. 158,
A.D. 774.

In the 150th year of the Hejra, *Al Mansur*, who, whatever his real sentiments might have been, paid always great observance, to the religion of his subjects, went from *Bagdad*, upon a pilgrimage to *Mecca*, but fell so sick upon his journey at *Abdawayah*, that he sent for his son and successor, *Al Modi*. It appears very plain from the manner in which he took his leave of this prince, that he had no great opinion of his prudence. "Treat," said *Al Mansur* in his last conversation he had with his son, "your own, and your family's relations, with marks of distinction, and that will reflect the greater respect on yourself; but, continued he, that is what I am apt to believe you will not do. Be kind to your freed men, and enlarge their numbers; because, should any reverse of fortune happen to you, you will be sure of their zealous services; but in this I am pretty sure, you will disobey me. Attempt not to enlarge *Bagdad*, on the eastern part of the river; a thing I know you will attempt, tho' you never can finish it. Suffer none of your women to bear too great a sway in public matters; but in this, I am certain you will disregard me." We have particularized this ironical manner, which the califf used towards his son, during his dying hours; because it gives us a strong idea of his character, and the opinion he had of the person to whom he spoke. His son, having taken leave of him, he proceeded to *Cusa*; but his illness encreasing, on the road, when he came to *Bir Maimun*, he

His last advice to his son.

His death and burial

there expired. Nothing was more common amongst the *Arabs*, than for the living to tear from the grave, the bodies of the dead to whom they had an enmity when living; and to treat them with all kinds of ignominy. For this reason, when *Al Mansur*'s body was carried from *Mecca* to be interred; a hundred graves similar to that, where it was deposited, were dug, that posterity might be in the dark, as to the real one.

His character.

Al Mansur died, when he was upwards of sixty-three years of age, and had reigned above twenty-two. In his person, he was, like most of the other *Arabs*, tall, thin and swarthy, and authors tell us of a very singular expedient he employed, to disguise his grey hairs, which was, to use two thousand drachms of musk every month. With regard to his intellectual and moral qualities, he undoubtedly possessed in an eminent degree, all the abilities, and many of the vices, as well as virtues of his predecessors. He was very brave, as particularly appeared, during the rebellion of the

His political, natural, and moral virtues and vices.

Rawandians. That he was a profound politician, is manifest from every act of his government; nor does it appear, as has been already observed, that he ever was cruel, but when the concerns of ambition or family interfered. Though he naturally was passionate and hasty, upon small occasions; yet, when the first sallies were over, he was very placable, and could enter into all the easy familiarities of life, even with children. In public however, his deportment was awful and austere. In short, according to the best accounts we have received of him, from those who lived nearest to his times, he had naturally about him every quality, that could form the agreeable companion and fine gentleman. His love of money was his failing; his jealousy of power, was his vice. The former led him to do many things that were mean, the latter many that were cruel. The treasures he left behind him in ready money, would be incredible, did we not reflect upon the prodigious wealth, and extent, of the countries, over which he was the absolute sovereign.

His vast riches.

Authors confidently aver, that they amounted to twenty-four thousand millions of dinars, and six hundred thousand millions of dihemms, a silver coin of an undetermined value, but amounting perhaps to about two shillings sterling. His oeconomy was so sordid, that he is said to have given his cook, no other wages than the perquisites of his kitchen, and to have obliged him to have furnished at his own expence, the firing, and the utensils of it. He was far from being generous, even to his most intimate friends. An instance of that is recounted in one of them, a man of some consideration, who thought his fortune was made, when *Al Mansur* came to the califat; and presented himself before the califf accordingly. But *Al Mansur*, instead of answering his hopes, asked him coldly, what he wanted? the other replied, to congratulate him upon his accession to the throne; upon which,

Story of *Al Mansur*.

which the califf without taking any other notice of him, ordered him a present of about seven hundred pounds sterling, and gave him a hint, that he was to trouble him no more; *Azhar*, for so his friend was called, repeating his visit next year, under pretence of enquiry for his majesty's health, *Al Mansur* bid him roughly, be gone; and not to plague him hereafter, but ordered him, at the same time another purse of the same sum. Notwithstanding this admonition, *Azhar*, some time after, paid the califf another visit, and wanted to expostulate with him upon the reasons, of his majesty's withdrawing his intimacy, and countenance from him. But the califf cut him short, by telling him in fact, "that the friendship, which had passed between them, was "mere matter of form, and had left no trace behind it in "his mind," and to discourage him from ever coming again, he gave him a final dismissal without any present. This *Reflections* story, however unaffecting it may be, has been preserved on it. by historians, and it proves at least, in a very singular manner, that the califf was susceptible of friendship, since upon this occasion, it prevailed with him, not only to part with fourteen hundred pound, but to treat *Azhar* with coolness and humanity, notwithstanding his intrusions; in both which instances, he got the better of his natural disposition, which was turned to avarice and passion.

Al Mansur, notwithstanding those predominant vices, had Love of about him great docility towards those who he thought learning. could improve him in any useful science, or art. Few of his subjects understood the principles of his own religion, and laws, better than he did; and he even condescended to become the scholar, of the eminent doctors in that profession after he was califf. He was a great judge of personal merit, and knew perfectly well, the characters of his predecessors, their generals, and ministers; as well as of his own. He put one of his favourite ones to death, for insolence and tyranny, and affecting too great an independency upon himself. In other instances, he appears to have been constant and easy, towards those about him. He was the professed patron of philosophers, and mathematicians, whom he encouraged at his court. But, with all those good qualities, *Al Mansur*, appears to have been, or affected to be, superstitious to the last degree, and one of the principal servants about his person, was his astrologer; who consulted the face of the heavens, before he began any important expedition, or undertook any matter of great consequence.

Al Modi, or Mohdi, son of Al Mansur, third califf of the house of Abbas.

Al Mohdi then upon *Isa*. This being done without any difficulty, *Al Mohdi* recognised *Rabi*, made his master's death public, and sent a courier from *Maimun*, where the califf died, to *Bagdad*, to which *Al Modi* had retired, waiting for that event; and in order to prevent any practices against his succession. No sooner was it known at *Bagdad*, that *Al Mansur* was dead, and that the chief Moslems had sworn to maintain the succession than *Al Modi*, without any opposition, was proclaimed and recognized califf.

He buys off *Isa's* reversion to the throne.

Isa, his cousin-german, was then at *Cufa*, and had been kept in the dark, as to *Al Mansur's* illness and death. When he heard of *Al Modi's* accession, he thought, perhaps not without some reason, that he had been ill treated throughout the whole affair, and began to have some thoughts of fortifying himself at *Cufa*; and of ascertaining his claim to the succession. *Al Modi* had foreseen, and provided against, this event. He sent a thousand chosen horse to *Cufa*, who surprised *Isa*, before he had taken any measures to secure himself, and brought him before the califf at *Bagdad*. *Isa*, had too great a party in the empire for *Al Mohdi*, to think of treating him with severity; but he gave him to understand, that he must relinquish his reversion to the throne of the califat, in favour of *Al Hadi*, *Al Mohdi's* son; on which condition, if he would freely comply with it, he added, he would give to *Isa*, a present of about seven millions sterling. *Isa*, we are told, complied with this proposal, and received the money accordingly.

He suppresses an insurrection.

This storm was no sooner blown over, than an impostor, one *Yusef*, upon the strength of a pretended inspiration, or prophecy, set up for himself in *Korasan*. No pretext was too absurd, to seduce the people of those parts into the party of any imposture, that tended towards an alteration of government. *Yusef*, found a vast number of followers, and he set up his standard, at *Busa*. The califf, hearing of this rebellion, sent *Nezid*, one of his best generals to suppress it, which, he not only effectually did, by defeating and dispersing

persing the impostor's followers, but brought him in chains, to *Bagdad*, where he was publicly crucified, by the califf's order.

Constantine Copronimus, was now dead; and mutual The incursions, and ravages, as formerly, went on between the *Greeks* de- *Moslems* and the *Greeks*; but greatly in favour of the former. feat his The Christians however, in the 161st year of the Hejra, troops. invaded *Syria*, with a hundred thousand men, and defeated the califf's troops, of whom they killed five of their chief officers, and two thousand common men. Next year, the califf, ordered *Hasan*, one of his generals, to make an irruption in *Phrighia*, to revenge that defeat, and gave him a great army for that purpose. But *Hasan* found the Imperialists too well provided for his reception. For, though he besieged *Dorylæum*, a city of the greater *Phrygia*, and pressed it with uncommon vigour for seventeen days, yet his provisions falling short, he was obliged to raise the siege, and to march to *Amorium*, another city of the same province, which he attempted to surprize, but it was so well defended, by a numerous and well-provided garrison, that he met with a repulse, and, after losing a vast number of men, he was obliged, without making any conquest, to return home.

The califf, irritated by those disgraces, and losses, raised, He makes next year, another great army, the command of which he his second gave to his son *Harun*, afterwards the famous califf *Harun* son *Harun Al Rashid*; the most promising youth of his age; and he his gene- assigned him for his counsellor *Yahya*, of the *Barmac* family, ral, a man of great wisdom and virtue. That nothing might be wanting, to the success of the young general, the califf himself, tho' he was then about to pay a visit, with great splendour to *Jerusalem*, accompanied his son, some part of his march, and after leaving him for some time, rejoined him, near the plains of *Alleppo*, from whence he proceeded to *Jerusalem*. *Harun* then advanced, against *Samaleck*; which who take *Samaleck*. after a siege of thirty-eight days, and reducing the town to ruins, he took; and then returned to *Bagdad*.

By this time, a fresh impostor started up in *Korasan*, in the person of one *Mohanna*, one of the boldest, and most desperate Enthusiasts, that ever appeared. He had been secretary to the famous *Abu Moslem*, and upon his death he went into the army, where he lost an eye. This loss added to his own appearance, which was naturally despicable, determined him to quit the profession of arms, and to set up as a juggler, in which profession, by the help of some smattering in chymistry, a study, which has always been greatly in vogue in *Persia*, he met with so much success, that he found the transition easy, from a chymist, into a prophet. The foundation of his doctrine, was an opinion, which *Abu Moslem* himself, whose memory was in high reputation in those parts had, that an emanation of divinity, or divinity itself, ever

An account of a remarkable impostor.

and rebel. since the creation of the world, had transmigrated thro' a certain number of chosen men, the last of whom was *Abu Moslem*; and that the divinity had passed, upon his death, into himself, *Mokanna*.

His arts of juggling. This absurd persuasion which was no other than a mistaken part of Pythagorism, had been long held in the eastern countries, and the professors of it, were called *Golates*; and the artificers of *Mokanna*, procured fresh credit to it, and numerous converts to him. To disguise the disagreeable appearance of his person, he spoke to his followers, in a veil, which he said he did in imitation of *Moses*, one of his predecessors; the brightness of whose face the people could not endure. Amongst his other juggling performances, he raised, by some preparation resembling *Phosphorus*, the appearance of a Moon out of a pit, for which, he was called by the *Persians*, the Moon-maker; and at last, he came to such a pitch of insolence, that he arrogated to himself divine honours, pretended to look into futurity, and even to restore the dead to life. In short, his followers grew so numerous, that he made himself master of *Marwarahnahr*, *Nakhshab*, *Kash*, and many fortified places. But the novelty of his appearance wearing off, his followers according to the nature and inconstancy of their country, all but a few Enthusiasts, desperate, and determined, like himself, slunk away; so that the generals which the califf sent against him, obliged him to retire to a fortress where he had made preparations for a vigorous defence, in hopes that his votaries, would relieve him. But a divinity in distress, with the powers he pretended to, is no object of allegiance, or compassion. All his emissaries, however pompous his professions were, could not work his deliverance. Dreading to fall alive, into the hands of his enemies, he called together his family and friends, to whom he administered a strong poison, in wine; which all of them drank, excepting one of his concubines, who, not chusing to suffer that kind of martyrdom, had concealed herself, and was found alive, when the califf's general took the castle. *Mokanna*, after this, reduced all the bodies of the dead to ashes, and threw himself into a liquid of a chymical composition, which is said to have consumed his body, all but his hair; and this is a fresh presumption, that all the amusing tricks he exhibited, were owing, to some knowledge he had in that art. The death he chose proved him to be a thorough Enthusiast, because he had always pretended to his followers, that he would ascend to heaven; and that his soul should inform a grey-headed person, who would give them the earth for their inheritance. His disappearing in the manner he did, which was revealed by his concubine, the only living creature, whom the califf's troops found in the fortress, begot such a veneration for his memory, that the number of his sectaries were enlarged, and distin-

His arts of juggling.

Set's up for a prophet.

The amazing circumstances of his death.

distinguished themselves, by wearing white habits, in opposition to the favourite colour of the house of *Abbas*, which was black.

Those rebellions being thus suppressed, the califf resumed *Harun* in his operations against the *Greek* empire, which was then vades the governed by the empress *Irene*. Young *Harun*, his second imperial son, had behaved so well in his last command, that he was territorially pitched upon for this important service, and obtained the rics, command of an army of ninety-five thousand chosen troops.

Having entered the *Greek* territories, he defeated an imperial general sent to oppose him; but instead of marching directly to *Pontus* and *Bithinia*, he advanced, thro' a dangerous

defile, that lay between the point of the *Dydænian* mountains, and the river *Sangaryus*, a pass which the *Greeks* had thought to be so impracticable, that they had left it unguarded; then, crossing that river, he filled, all *Pontus* and *Bithenia*, with con-

sternation and carried fire and sword into all places that resisted him. In short, he carried the terror of his arms, as far as

Nicodemia, and *Constantinople* itself was so alarmed, that the empress *Irene*, proposed terms of accommodation. *Harun*,

would not have given ear to a treaty of that kind, after having surmounted such vast difficulties, and when he was

in a manner, in view of *Constantinople*, the object which had cost his country so much blood and treasure, had it not

been that his army was at that time in the utmost distress. The *Arabs*, and the *Syrians*, of which it was composed,

had never been very provident with regard to subsistence, nor did they ever much regard the erecting of magazines,

which was the great reason, why many of their expeditions miscarried. *Irene*, was too much under the influence of her

fears, to make the proper advantage of *Harun's* distress; her affairs then being greatly embroiled, and *Helpidius*, the

governor of *Sicily*, who had fled to the *Arabs*, after his being defeated, being by them proclaimed emperor. Both

parties having thus their reasons for peace, a treaty was concluded, by which the empress, agreed to pay to the califf,

an annual subsidy of seven hundred thousand pieces of gold, upon condition of *Harun's* discontinuing his devastations,

and of carrying his army back to *Bagdad*. She likewise consented, that he should have an immediate supply of all

kinds of provisions, and that the same should be continued to them during their march through the imperial territo-

ries; and likewise, that she should provide them with guides to conduct them homewards, in the safest and most com-

modious manner; without being obliged to march, thro' the dangerous pass already mentioned. Thus ended *Ha-*

run's glorious expedition, and the success of it gave for several years tranquillity to the califf's government; a blessing which it rarely experienced.

This was improved by *Al Mohdi*, in farther enlarging, beautifying, and peopling *Bagdad*, which in a very few

He forces the empress *Irene* to conclude a shameful treaty with him.

years attention to him,

dominions
and the
arts of
peace.

years arose to an amazing pitch of greatness ; owing, partly to the califf's favour, but chiefly to its own advantageous situation. The arts of peace were proportionably cultivated, thro' the other parts of the califf's dominions, particularly at *Basra*, which, tho' it had been founded since the commencement of the califat, was at this time, one of the richest, and most polite cities in all the East ; and in possession of a mint, from which some pieces have descended to the cabinets of the curious, in the present age. Those pieces, which go by the name dirhems, (the drachma, of the antients) did not admit of being stamp'd with the effigies of the sovereign. They were generally inscribed with some religious sentence on one side, and the name of the califf, and on the other, the name of the place where they were coined, and the year of the Hejra. Seminaries of literature, flourished likewise at this time, at *Damascus*, and *Kayru*, in *Egypt*, a country, of which the califfs of the house of *Abbas*, seem to have been particularly jealous of, by their perpetually changing its governors. But *Al Mohdi*, appears to have possessed part of his father's superstitious notions, though he was very unlike him in many other respects. He put to death many of his subjects, who had embraced zendicism, a sect, that par'ook of the tenets of the *Saracens*, and the *Manicheans*. He is likewise said, to have been severe upon the Christians of the district of Hems. But either he, or his son *Harun*, did not follow the example of *Al Mansur*, in expelling them out of his dominions ; for, we are told, that when that young prince returned from his Constantinopolitan expedition, he brought back with him, a vast number of Christians, who had been made slaves in the *Greek* empire.

His severe-
ty against
schisma-
tics.

The great
virtues of
the califf.

In many other respects, *Al Mohdi*, excelled his father. He was generous, to a degree of prodigality. He replaced, to private persons, large sums of money, that had been extorted from them by his father. He attended in person to all the grievances of his subjects ; nor did he, when it came to his knowledge, ever suffer the powerful to oppress the weak ; and, above all, from virtuous as well as political principles, he took care to circumscribe the power of the governors of his provinces. He was particularly careful in his choice of civil magistrates ; and that they should be men of exemplary lives, and well skilled in the principles of law and equity. We may therefore reasonably conclude, that if his father *Al Mansur*, entertained any prepossessions against him, they were owing to his being the very reverse of himself, in point of œconomy. To give one instance of that ; *Al Mohdi*, in a single pilgrimage he made, from *Bagdad* to *Mecca*, expended about four millions sterling *English*. But the reader, is to observe, that the califfs, upon such occasions, were often attended, by some hundred of thousands of their subjects ; besides their ordinary retinue, and a ca-
lin

liff of generosity and spirit, never failed to entertain them all at his own expences.

Al Mohdi, upon this occasion, was not only liberal, but **Luxury** luxurious, beyond any thing that had ever been seen before, **of the** amongst the *Moslems*. His camels, were loaded with the **califf**. most delicious fruits of the east, and all the delicacies which that luxuriant country could produce. Being to march through prodigious tracts of burning sands, he was provided with a proportionable quantity, not only of water, but of ice and snow, to render his meals the more cool and agreeable, not only during his journey to, and from *Mecca*, but during his residence there; to the great amazement of the frugal *Meccans*, who had no ideas of such refinements. He was equally magnificent in his taste of building, and left so many monuments of it at *Mecca*, and by enlarging the portico of the *Caaba*, many zealous Moslems were offended at it, as deviating too much from the original simplicity of their religion. While he was intent upon those works, one of his subjects brought him a slipper, which he pretended, had belonged to the Prophet, and for which the califf, immediately ordered him a reward of ten thousand dinars; giving, to his courtiers, a reason for this extraordinary liberality; "I am, said he, sensible, that our Prophet never saw this Instance
" slipper, but, had I disregarded it, I might have given, to of his po-
" the lower ranks of people, who believe it to be his, a licy.
" handle of reproach." His private alms at *Mecca*, were likewise excessive. When he went to the mosque there, he distributed vast sums to all who were about him. Observing one day, that one *Hajani*, a Pilgrim of great sanctity, who had attended him to *Mecca*, begged nothing from him, "*Hajani*, said he, have you nothing to desire from your sovereign?" *Hajani*'s reply, would have done honour to a better religion. "What, said he, should I desire, in
" the house of God, but God himself." This answer, made such an impression upon the califf, that after many expressions of the deepest humiliation, he ordered a present of ten thousand dinars, (about seven thousand pounds *English*) to be given to *Hajani*. But his passion for the learned, and for men of genius, exceeded, if possible, even that for the religious. For, having employed *Merwan Hafas*, to compose an *Arabic* poem; he was so well pleased with it, that he gave him a reward of seventy thousand dihrems, which was a thousand dihrems for every passage, the whole poem, consisting of no more than seven: stanzas.

Besides those virtues, belonging to a great prince, he had **His amia-**
many qualifications of an easy companion, and a good na- **ble quali-**
tured man. Happening one day, while he was hunting, **ties.**
a diversion he was passionately fond of, to be separated from his company, he found himself obliged to take shelter in the cottage of a poor peasant, to whom he communicated his
distress,

A pleasant
story of
the califf.

distress, but without letting him know his quality. The peasant, upon this, treated him with his homely fare, of brown bread and milk. But the califf asking, whether he had nothing better to entertain him with, his host produced a bottle of excellent wine, which, put the califf, who took a large draught of it, into such a humour, that he demanded of the peasant, whether he knew who he was? The answer being in the negative, you must know, replied *Al Mohdi*, that I have a good place at the califf's court. *Al Mohdi*, again applying the wine to his head, asked him the same question, and received the same answer; but with some marks of peevishness for his impertinence. Then replied *Al Mohdi*, I must let you know, that I am a great lord under the commander of the faithful. The application of the bottle a third time, putting the califf into a still better humour, and, "do you not really know, said he to the host, who I am?" the peasant then beginning to lose all patience, told him, he ought to be satisfied with the answer already given him, without renewing his troublesome impertinence. "Then friend," said the califf, "know that I am the commander of the faithful, to whom all the world does homage." The peasant upon this, with a contemptuous look of admiration at his folly, snatched up the bottle and conveyed it away, to the no small surprize of the califf, who asked him, the reason, why he did so? Because, replied his host, that I am afraid a fourth draught, will bring you to be the prophet *Mahomet*, and a fifth may bring you to be God Almighty himself. This repartee, which was at once so just, and so witty, pleased the califf greatly, and his attendants happening to come up, they soon convinced the peasant, that his guest was the califf, and *Al Mohdi* ordered, a vest, and a purse of money, to be given to his hospitable landlord, who told him, that thence forth, he never should dispute his word, though he should take it into his head, to make himself three or four times a greater man than he had done.

His jealousy of
his ministers.

Al Mohdi was not without his family jealousy of the house of *Hesham*; but we meet with none of those instances of inhumanity, that were so commonly exercised against it in his father's time. We meet however, with a remarkable incident, which indicates, that it hung about him. Tho' he governed by ministers, yet he was never governed by them. He displaced *Asberi*, whom he had advanced to that high post, and filled it up with *Yakub*. This minister, was so amiable in his private character, that he shared an extraordinary degree of his master's confidence and affections, even to the partaking with him in all his parties of pleasure. This eminent distinction, far from overawing, excited the envy, of the other courtiers, who found means to inform *Al Mohdi*, that his favourite minister, was in his heart,
a friend

a friend to the house of *Ali*. This was too tender a point, for *Al Mohdi*, whatever his private conviction might be, to neglect it. As several of the house of *Ali*, were still alive, for the distinction was too glorious for them to disown it, he made *Yakub*'s putting one of them to death, the test of his fidelity and loyalty. The task was disagreeable, as the family continued still to be very popular, and the more so through his misfortunes; and *Al Mohdi*, to induce his minister to go through the bloody work with more alacrity, made him a present of a large sum of money, and of a wife out of his own seraglio, who, in fact, was to serve as a spy, upon his conduct. *Yakub*, having got the party, doomed to death, in his power, intimated to him his sentence; but, the other conjuring him to spare his life, that he might meet with favour, from his great ancestor, *Ali*, in the next world, *Yakub*, not only relented, but gave him all the money he had received, as the price of his blood, and favoured his escape. The wife of *Yakub*'s bosom, however, discovered this humane treachery, to her former master, and the prisoner being retaken, was confined in a secret apartment, of the califf's palace. *Al Mohdi*, then demanded of his minister, whether he had observed his commands, in putting the obnoxious person to death. *Yakub*, averred that he had, and confirmed what he said, by the most solemn oaths, and protestations; that is, by the hand and life of the commander of the faithful. Upon this, the criminal was produced, and the califf was so moderate, as only to order *Yakub* to prison; more perhaps, for his dissimulation, than his disobedience.

The great services which *Harun Al Rashid* had done, to his father and his empire, and his promising qualities, inspired *Al Mohdi* with the thoughts, of setting his eldest son, aside from the succession, in favour of *Harun*. *Harun*, being then at a distance from court, his father communicated his intentions to him, and ordered him to repair to *Bagdad*, to receive the honour he designed him. That young prince magnanimously rejected it; as being an injustice done to his elder brother, who had been guilty of no fault, to deserve such an exclusion. *Al Mohdi*, thought that as he had gone so far, it was dangerous to leave the thing unfinished; and therefore sent orders for *Harun*, to meet him at *Arud*, a town in the district of *Masabdan*, that they might have a conference together.

The reader loses half his pleasure, in perusing the history of the califfs, unless he carries in his mind, an idea of the manners of their country, and times. The natural enthusiasm of the *Arabs*, the degenerated mythology of the *Egyptians*, and the misunderstood principles of the antient *Persians*, joined to the ignorance, and the effeminacy of the *Assyrians*, concurred, in making the califf's court at this time, the theatre of credulous superstition. It is easily to be

be imagined, that a prince, possessing such extensive dominions as the califf did, had about him, a variety of attendants, and suitors, from all those countries; and the dawn of learning, which now appeared so strongly in his court, was far from removing the evil. The study of astronomy, had from all antiquity, been the favourite study of the *Arabs*, and the *Syrians*, bordering upon *Arabia*. But the times of ignorance, enthusiasm, and blood shed, had abolished the rational science, and left in its stead, a false, foolish delusion, termed astrology; by which, instead of investigating, the situations and revolutions of the stars, they pretended to ascertain their virtues, and influences. *Al Mohdi*, himself, was not exempted from this ridiculous weakness. In imitation of his father, he held his astrologer amongst the principal persons of his court, and his subjects in imitation of him, undertook nothing of importance, without consulting the aspect of the stars.

Al Mohdi, had a favourite concubine, named *Hafana*, who seems to have entertained, a most sovereign contempt for such fooleries. Being in the interest of the heir apparent, when she received an order to prepare for her journey with the califf, she upbraided his chief astrologer, *Theophilus*, a native of *Edeffa*, and a Christian, with having advised him to undertake that journey, and wished that God might strike him dead, for the ill offices he had done. *Theophilus*, according to the Moslem historians, most solemnly disclaimed his having any hand in persuading the califf to the journey, but gave her to understand, that if the califf should die in it, she herself ought to cover her head with dust.

Conjecture,

death and

Theophilus, by this answer, very probably, meant no more, than that the favourite mistress, would be reduced to a very deplorable condition, should the califf die. But the sequel gave it a very different complexion. For, *Hafana*, stung with jealousy of another lady, who she thought to be too much in favour with the califf, made her a present, of an apple, impregnated with strong poison, but so artfully, that it retained all its native beauty. The lady, instead of eating this apple, made a present of it to *Al Mohdi*, after he arrived at *Arud*, and had met with his son *Harun*. The moment he eat it he perceived he was poisoned, and soon after expired; when he was about thirty-nine years of age.

character,
of the ca-
liff, *Al*
Mohdi.

We have in the history of this califf, been so diffuse, concerning his person and qualifications, that little remains to be said of his character. He was undoubtedly amiable, in his manners and disposition, and may be termed the father of learning in his country. This astrologer, as he is called, *Theophilus* of *Edeffa*, translated into *Arabic*, the works of *Homer*, and several other of his ministers, as has been already hinted, were men of learning and genius. The same

cannot

cannot be said of his principal physician, who got his preferment by a singular adventure. A favourite mistress of the califf, sent to him some of her own water, a practice very common in *Arabia*, to know what disease she laboured under, but ordered the maid who carried it, carefully to conceal from whom it came. The maid accordingly, told *Isa*, (for that was the physician's name) who then kept an apothecary's shop, that she came from a poor woman. No, said *Isa*, in jest, this water came from a great princess, who is now with child of a prince; the maid, returning with this answer, and the lady happening at that time to be with child, communicated the story to the califf, who was so well pleased with it, that though *Isa*, was far from being eminent in his profession, he made him his first physician, and gave him a magnificent present.

Al Mohdi, in his person, was tall and well looked, and so generous, that he was taxed with profusion, for he spent all the immense treasures, in a very short time, that were left him by his father. Some authors seem to think, that all the shew of devotion he made, was little better than affectation and hypocrisy, but, be that as it will, his reign was unstained by those shocking barbarities, that were so common under his father, and some of the greatest of his predecessors.

Al Hadi.

WHEN this prince came to the throne of the califf, the people, through the lenity of his fathers govern- State of ment, and through a long train of peace and prosperity, affairs un- were degenerating greatly, from those virtues, that had der the made their fathers great. By a turn, not uncommon amongst new ca- nations, the state was in danger of running from one ex- liff. tream to another, from superstition to infidelity; for such was the profession of Zendicism, which has been already mentioned. *Al Mohdi*, before his death, was so sensible of the terrible effects which a total disregard for religion must have upon the state, that he punished all the *Zendics* with death, wherever he could find them, and his eldest son was employed in an expedition against them when he came to the throne. *Harun Al Rashid*, his brother, was with *Al Mohdi* at the time of his death, but was too generous to take Generosity of *Al Rashid*, any advantage of his father's partiality in his favour, to the prejudice of his brother. Far from that, he had no sooner performed the funeral obsequies of his father, than he obliged all the great men of his court to swear allegiance to *Al Hadi*, who, by *Harun's* advice repaired directly to *Bagdad*, where he was recognised for califf. *Al Hadi*, followed

followed the maxims of his father and grandfather, in frequently removing his governors; particularly those of *Egypt*. The *Zendics*, at the time of *Al Mohdi's* death, were actually in rebellion in the province of *Fabariston*, but were reduced by *Al Hadi*; the name of their leader we are told was *Madar*.

Rebellion
against *Al*
Hadi.

But a much more dangerous rebellion broke out, under a descendant of the house of *Ali*, named *Hosein*, who was proclaimed califf, at *Medina*. This person seems to have been more sanguinary than the other descendants of that family. For, after being proclaimed at *Medina*, he proceeded to *Mecca*, where he put to death all the Pilgrims, who favoured the house of *Abbas*. *Hosein*, about the same time, published a kind of a proclamation, by which he gave liberty to all slaves, who should take up arms under him. This brought great numbers to his standard, and his vast liberality to the inhabitants of *Bagdad*, and *Cufa*, made him a most formidable rebel. The truth is, many of the *Moslems* looked upon the dominion of the house of *Abbas*, to be no other, than, as it really was, a fortunate usurpation, and the princes of that house, conscious of the weakness of their title, had been glad to make a compromise with the descendants of the house of *Ali*, to whom they gave very great appointments, and revenues, besides occasional presents to keep them quiet. *Al Hadi*, or his father *Al Mohdi*, for instance, made a present to this same *Hosein*, of upwards of twenty-five thousand pound sterling, which he distributed in gratuities, amongst the *Cufans*, and the people of *Bagdad*. We are told, that he stript himself of the shirt he wore, and gave it amongst them, leaving to himself only a garment lined with furs. By those arts, he soon got together a giddy rout, but being unequal to the regular, well-disciplined troops of the califf, they were easily put to the sword; and *Hosein* by himself being killed, his head was cut off, and no quarter was shewn, to his adherents. The descendants of the house of *Ali*, upon this defeat, were stript of all the pensions, and possessions, they held under the government of the califf.

It is sup-
pressed by
his troops.

Ingrati-
tude of the
califf to-
wards *Al*
Rashid

Al Hadi, was no sooner seated on the throne in tranquillity, than he naturally turned his thoughts towards limiting the succession to the descendants of his own body, he having a son *Jaafer*, then alive. This was a delicate point, and far more so, as the succession had been already so solemnly settled, upon *Harun Al Rashid*, who had behaved with so generous a disinterestedness to his brother. Add to this, that *Harun* was not only very powerful and popular, but was the favourite of his mother *Kizaran*, the same lady, who sent to consult the apothecary *Ila*. It must be admitted, that the succession to the califat, had hitherto been extremely precarious, and it had been chiefly determined by the will of the reigning prince, and the consent of the chief *Moslems*, during his life time. *Harun* therefore, had undoubtedly in him, the right of succession, but *Al Hadi* was resolved at all

all events, to carry it for his own son. But his mother, was not a woman to be trifled with. She had a great party at court, and even such an ascendancy over the califf, that her court was as numerous as his, which he was at last so provoked with, that he ordered her to mind her wheel and her distaff, and swore he would cut off the head of any of his officers, who should apply to her for favour.

Al Hadi, on the other hand, was cruel, secret, and cunning. His treachery and. He had the affair of the succession, so much at heart, that he formed a design of murdering his mother, his brother, and *Barmac*, his first minister. *Barmac*, was looked upon, as one of the wisest men in the whole empire, and had taken the liberty to remonstrate to the califf, upon the injustice, and danger, of endeavouring to set *Harun* aside from the succession, in favour of a child, who could not head the Pilgrimages to *Mecca*, nor perform the duties of an Iman, or High Priest; which the station of califf required. The califf, finding that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to have the succession altered, during the lives of his mother, brother, and minister, ordered one *Harthema*, a private favourite, to put his brother, and *Barmac*, to death, unnaturally; and he sent to his mother, a poisoned goose, in a present; sent.

Kizaran, was too wise to be over-reached by her son. but is out. She had made sure before hand of *Harthema*, and had intelligence of all the califf's bloody designs, which extended to put to death, all the friends of the house of *Ali*. *Harthema*, appeared shocked at receiving so many inhuman commissions; but the califf told him, that he must either execute them, or die; and withdrew to the inner part of his palace, 'till *Harthema*, should determine upon the part he was to act. This was soon resolved upon. He communicated the whole affair to *Kizaran*, who immediately murdered her son; some say, by giving him a glass of poisoned water, and others by smothering him with pillows. The murder was no sooner committed, then *Kizaran* called out to *Harthema* to come to see the califf dead, for he lay exposed on a bed, being then not above twenty-six years of age.

This prince appears to have been equally weak, and wicked, and to have depended entirely upon his own despotic power, for the success of his projects. In his person he is said to have been very robust, and brave. Like his predecessors, he was extremely fond of poetry, of which we have a remarkable instance, that does honour to his memory. He one day gave it in the option of a favourite poet, who had presented him with some verses, either to receive thirty thousand direms, in hand, or one hundred thousand, when he had taken the trouble, and been at the expence of carrying his order through all the formalities of the exchequer. Give me
me

His liberality to a poet. me, answered the poet, the thirty thousand direms in bar and the one hundred thousand in reversion, which the cal instantly complied with.

Harun Al Rashid.

General character of *Al Rashid's* reign.

WE are now arrived at the august age of the Moslem empire. The califf *Harun Al Rashid*, to all the magnanimity of his greatest predecessors, added the most polished virtues, and the most amiable conduct. Learned and brave in himself, he not only encouraged those virtues in others, but laid the foundations of science so deep, that it flourished long after his reign, and it was owing to his encouragement, that the East produced, in every branch of learning, some of the greatest names that adorn the history of literature.

His good fortune.

Al Rashid was one of the most fortunate princes, that ever sat upon any throne. At the time of his accession, he was no more than twenty-two years of age, and his preservation was considered as somewhat miraculous. His father *Al Mohdi*, had made him a present of a ring, worth about seventy thousand pound sterling, which his brother *Al Hadi* sent to demand as his right. But *Harun*, instead of delivering it to the messenger, threw it with great indignation into the Tygris. When he was called to the throne of the califf, having an affection for the ring, he placed himself upon the same spot, and threw as nearly, in the same direction as he could, a leaden ring after it, by which the divers, whom he employed, recovered his favourite ring, which gave him infinite satisfaction. This incident, trifling as it may seem, gave the Moslems a very advantageous prepossession, in *Harun's* favour, and they considered him as the darling of heaven; which undoubtedly contributed greatly to the after happiness of his reign. *Jaafar*, the late califf's son, was obliged, for fear of his life, to recognize his uncle, and this act, being formally recorded, was of great service to *Harun*.

His piety,

It was the 171st year of the Hejra, which answers to the year of God, 787, when *Harun Al Rashid* mounted the throne of the califfs. As he had naturally a serious cast, he conciliated the affections of his subjects, by a great outward shew of piety, which he expressed by reading the koran. His health, at the time of his accession, being greatly impaired, he sent for *Baishua*, the son of *George*, *Almanza's*

and want of health.

Almanza's favourite physician, whose reputation was equal to that of his father, and finding great benefit from his advice; he took him into high favour, and gave him very noble appointments. *Al Rusbid*, like his predecessors, was often embroiled with the *Greek* empire, and towards the beginning of his reign, his generals invaded it, and defeated the imperialists, under one *Diogenes*, an officer of great valour and experience, who lost his life in the battle. He had about the same time, another war upon his hands, with the *Turks*, or, as they are called the *Kozars*. The daughter of the *Kakan*, or the prince of this people, having been affianced to *Barmac*, a brother, or relation, of *Harun's* first minister, happened to die soon after her arrival at *Barmac's* house; and her servants returning to her father's court, published every where, that she was poisoned, which the *Kakan* resented so much, that some hostilities passed between his troops, and those of *Harun*; but we are in the dark, as to particulars; as well as those of an expedition, in which, *Harun*, this year, is said to have carried his arms as far as *Ephesus*.

Embroid'd
with the
Greeks and
Turks.

The califf, in the 172d of Hejra, began to think of settling Reason his succession. In this he seems to have been partly, if not wholly determined by his affection to the famous *Zebeide*, the mother of his second son *Al Amin*, whom he appointed to be his immediate successor; and him to be succeeded, by on his elder brother *Al Haman*. But to make that prince some amends, for the wrong that was done him, *Harun* ordered his minister, *Barmac*, to superintend his education, and he gave *Al Maman*, the perpetual government of *Korasan*. We are not however to forget, that *Zebeide*, was the granddaughter of the famous califf *Al Mansur*, and that relation very probably gave the preference of the succession to her son. Both those princes were at this time very young, the eldest of them, *Al Maman*, having been born the very night his father came to the throne, nor indeed, does the succession seem to have been formally settled, 'till three years after, viz. in the 175th year of Hejra.

Amongst the other glories of *Harun I Rusbid's* reign, The naval the revival of the naval power of the *Moslems*, may be esteemed one of the greatest. For *Harun*, possessing the ambition of his predecessors, in the fourth year after his accession, fitted out a strong fleet, with a large body of land forces on board, for the conquest of the island of *Cyprus*. This fleet was encountered by another, commanded by that of the *Theophilus* the *Greek* admiral, who, we are told, was entirely defeated, and being taken prisoner, was carried to *Bagdad*, where he was put to death by the califf's order, because he would not turn Mahometan. This fact, however, being recorded only by *Theophanes* a *Greek* author, who, in many instances, appears to have been prejudiced against the *Moslems*, is justly questionable; as being directly repugnant,

not only to *Harun's* character for humanity, but likewise to the principles of his government.

Policy of
Al Rashid.

Al Rashid, was equally careful, as all the princes of his family had been, in curbing the powers of his governors of provinces. At the time of his accession, one *Musa*, was governor of *Egypt*; but he was soon removed, and his place filled up by *Moslim*, who seems to have been son to *Barmac*, the first minister, whom *Harun*, used to honour, with the appellation of "Father." *Moslim*, continued in his government but a very short time, and was succeeded, by one *Mahomet*, who, next year was superceded by *Yezid*, the son of *Hatem*. We mention these removals, not as instances of the califf's levity or suspicion, but of his wisdom, and policy; for, though he and the califfs of his house, seem to have laid it down as a maxim, not to continue a government above one year to one person; yet the removing of him, was not considered as a mark of disgrace, and he was sometimes employed in a year or two after, in the same government. They seem likewise to have been observant of another maxim, and that was, to appoint, in every province, or government, a chief treasurer, or receiver-general of the revenue, whose commission was intirely independent on the governor.

His mag-
nificence,
power and
encourage
ment of
learning.

It was by an adherence to those prudent maxims, that the califf was enabled to make a more splendid figure, than perhaps any eastern prince had done before. He invited learned men, from all parts of the East, to reside at his court, and none went unrewarded who had merit. He was himself very fond of poetry, and he is said to have composed *Arabic* verses. Next to the poets, physicians, (under which denomination, astronomers, and mathematicians, were comprehended,) met with the greatest encouragement. His first minister *Barmac*, had the merit of being the chief instrument of prompting the califf in his liberality towards men of genius, and translations into *Arabic* of the most valuable works of antiquity, became now common at *Bagdad*. *Barmac*, happening to fall dangerously ill, the califf ordered his physician *Bactishua*, to attend him, which he did, in two fits of sickness, and recovered him, upon which, *Barmac*, chose *Bactishua's* son, whose name was *Gabriel* for his own physician. This *Gabriel*, equalled, or excelled his father and grandfather, in that profession; and endeared himself so much to the califf, by a cure he performed, upon one of his favourite concubines, that *Harun* is said to have made him a present of five hundred thousand pieces of money; upon his explaining, the reason and principles of the cure. He had likewise in his service, as a physician, another Christian, whose name was *John*, and whom he particularly employed, in explaining and reading lectures, upon the writings of old physicians. This *John* is celebrated by the Moslem historians, as a man not only of great knowledge in his profession,

Instances
of the lat-
ter,

Particu-
larly to
physicians.

fection, but of vast wit and humour, and many facetious stories, are recorded both of him and *Ga'riel*, as well as of another eminent physician, an *Indian*, whose name was *Sali*.

Harun, seems to have made no distinction between the Moslem and Christian religion, when he found a man of eminent abilities in either. A beautiful *Egyptian* lady, having been presented to him by his brother *Abdallah*, while he was governor of *Egypt*, she fell ill of a disease, which baffled all the califf's physicians; upon which he applied to *Abdallah*, to send her a physician from her native country. *Abdallah*, accordingly, sent him *Balatianus*, the patriarch of *Alexandria*, who was considered as one of the greatest physicians of the East, and upon his performing a remarkable cure upon the lady, he made the patriarch a present of a great sum of money, and ordered the churches, that had been taken from the Christian *Egyptians*, to be restored to them. This *Balatianus*, appears to be a person of great worth, and we are told, he was patriarch of *Alexandria* forty-seven years. Upon his death, that patriarchate fell into contempt; for it was purchased by one *Eustatius*, a dresser of hemp, who happened by accident to find a sum of money, that had been buried under ground.

Zebeide, *Harun*'s favourite wife, was as eminent as him-*Zebeide* self in many respects. The succession of the califat, being founds settled according to her mind, upon her son *Al Aman*, she *Tauris*: founded the city of *Tauris* in *Aberjan*, as *Harun* did another, called after his own name, lying equally contiguous to *Armenia*, *Cilicia*, and *Syria*. But *Harun*, with all his great and amiable qualities, possessed that jealousy of power, which was so inherent to all the califfs, his predecessors, and which, in fact, tarnished their fairest virtues. Notwithstanding all the dreadful blows, that the house of *Ali* had received, and though ever since the last rebellion, they had been stript of all the possessions they held from the throne, yet they still continued numerous and powerful, nor could the califfs themselves, ever root from the minds of their subjects the veneration they had conceived for the descendants of the great *Ali*. In the 176th year of the Hejra, *Yahya*, a prince of that house renewed his family's pretensions to the califat, in the province of *Dylem*, a district that was bounded on the West by *Aderbijan*, and in the North by the *Hyrkania* sea, but now known by the name of *Ghilar*. Rebellion
The appearance which *Yahya* made, was so formidable, against the
that *Harun*, sent *Fade* of the great house of *Barmac*, at the califf.
head of fifty thousand men, to suppress it. *Fade* was at
that time governor, of the *Persian Irak*, and *Tabaristan*;
and advancing to *Korasan* where the strength of the Shirte
interest lay, he thought proper to propose to *Yahya*, an ac-
commodation with the califf, which *Yahya*, accepted of,
and *Harun* confirmed, but did not observe. For we are told, suppress.
that *Yahya*, having disbanded his troops, went to *Bagdad* along
Y. 2.

along with *Fade*, and that soon after, he was by *Harun's* orders, confined to prison in irons.

Affairs of *Spain.* But, however powerful *Harun* was in the East, he never could recover the empire of the califat in *Spain*; where *Abdalrahman* the califf of the house of *Ommiyah*, was now dead, after a long and a glorious reign. He left behind him two sons, *Hesham* and *Solyman*, the latter of whom was governor of *Toledo*. Those two princes quarrelling, a decisive action happened between their armies, at a place called *Bulche*, in which, *Solyman* the second son, was entirely defeated; and *Hesham* became master of *Toledo*. Soon after a kind of an accommodation, being set on foot between the two brothers, *Solyman* sold his pretensions to *Hesham*, for a sum of money, and then retired to *Barbary*. *Hesham*, after this continued in the undisputed possession of what is called the western califat; and applied himself to the arts of peace. We are told that *Abdalmalec*, one of his generals, conquered *Narboune* and *Gironne*, and many other places of great importance; but the mention of his conquests seem to have been stifled by the Christian historians. Though he was a profest *Moslem*, and repaired or built, many magnificent mosques, particularly, a great one at *Corduba*, yet he protected the Christians, as well as the Moslems, in all their civil and religious rights; but after he had carried his arms into *Biscay* and *Asturias*, he was defeated by *Alphonso*, the grandson of the famous *Pelagius*, and according to the Christian historians, lost seventy thousand men in one battle.

The califf In the 179th year of the Hejra the califf *Harun*, was performs troubled with some scruples of conscience, concerning a vow and vow he had made, when he was persecuted by his brother; visits *Meca* to go in a pilgrimage on foot to *Mecca*, and to return on ca on foot. foot likewise; provided he survived the trouble he was then in. He often made mention of this vow, but those about him made light of it, and endeavoured to divert him from performing it. He, however this year, formally applied, for the opinion of the principal doctors of the law, who informed him, that they thought him under an obligation, to perform his vow. Upon this *Harun* set out on foot, with great magnificence, his subjects lining the roads for him, and covering them in many places, with costly stuffs and carpets. During his absence, he committed the important government of *Egypt*, to his brother *Abdallah*; but we are told he did not continue him long in it, being removed to make way for another, who soon after was replaced by *Abdallah* once more.

A new The studies of peace and religion, was far from diverting war with *Herun's* attention to war; for, in the 180th year of the the *Greeks*. Hejra, he invaded the dominions of the *Greeks*, with a most formidable power, having struck a great deal of money, probably, for the pay of his army upon that occasion. His

His progress was more dreadful, than became a civilized conqueror, for he laid waste the countries through which he passed, with terrible ravages, carrying off vast numbers into captivity. We know, however, of no permanent conquests he made, but the city of *Thebas* in *Lycaonia*, which he took. But the silence of authors, is no proof of his not making a much farther progress; because, it is certain that *Harun* was in possession of a greater extent of territory, than any of his ancestors had ever been; though it was very difficult through the custom that the *Arabs* have of distinguishing and altering the names of places, to be precise as to the boundaries of his dominions. In *Africa* particularly, though he still kept a footing there, yet the empire of *Morocco*, was by this time founded, and had little or no dependence upon the califf; neither does he seem to have had any direct command over the *Moslems* of *Europe*. *Spain*, was at this time, governed by *Hakem*, the son of *Hesham*, who imitated the virtues of his father, both in peace and war, and sat upon the throne for above twenty-seven years. He was not however without great troubles. His territories were invaded, by his two uncles, from *Africa*, to which they had retired during the life time of his father; but he defeated them, and one of them, *Solyman*, was killed in a bloody battle, while the other, *Abdallah*, was obliged to shut himself up in *Valencia*. *Hakem*, had not such good success, against *Alphonso*. That prince continued to govern under the title of a monarch, the small uncomfortable tracts, that had been so bravely defended, by the famous *Pelagius*. His predecessor, *Morugat*, and other princes, who had succeeded *Pelagius*, had been obliged to pay homage, and tribute, to the califf's of the house of *Ommiyah*, and *Abdallahman*, exacted from them every year a hundred virgins, for the use of his seraglio. *Alphonso*, had spirit enough to refuse to pay this tribute, and for this reason, he is by historians, where the called *Alphonso* the chaste. Having the advantage of situation, and improving the intestine divisions of his enemies, he gave many signal defeats to the *Moslems*, and at last reigned undisputed master, of *Asturias*, and *Lycaonia*. Harun conquers the bas.

Harun Al Rashid, was wise enough not to intermeddle with the affairs of a country, which like *Spain*, was too great a distance from the seat of his empire, to be easily governed, and which could not without great difficulty have been now reduced. He therefore at this time, applied himself to polish the manners of his subjects, and to diffuse knowledge, and arts amongst them, by his precepts, example, and power. He was particularly fond of a Mahometan doctor, one *Malec*, who arrived at a great age, and was noted for his modesty, as well as learning. *Harun* appointed this *Malec*, to be tutor to his sons, and ordered him to instruct them in his palace. This interfered with *Malec's* other Affairs of Spain.

other business, which was that of giving public lectures, to the young nobility, and others, in the mosques of *Bagdad*. He therefore excused his attendance, to the califf. "Knowledge sir, said he, ought herself to be attended, without her being obliged to attend others." The califf *Harun*, far from being provoked at this reply, (though he was very tender in points of that nature,) found it to be sensible and public spirited, and ordered his sons, to repair with *Melec's* other scholars, to the mosque.

His learning, how acquired.

But though *Harun*, was passionately fond of knowledge, he acquired it, not as a pedant, but as a great prince. Having heard of a doctor named *Asmai*, a man of prodigious learning, but of little conduct, or prudence in life, he took him for his instructor. The reader is here to be put in mind, that the preaching to the people, and explaining the koran, at certain times, were duties incumbent upon every califf; so that *Harun's* application to those studies, was, in fact, acquiring the arts of government. *Asmai* was particularly noted, for being master of a chaste, polite, style of language, which the califf was resolved to improve by. But before he put himself, under the tuition of his new master, he acquainted him, that being not at all insensible of his failings, he required him never to be too officious in public, nor too assuming in private; not to offer his opinion 'till it was asked, and to do it with all possible precision, without ostentation. Such, and many others of the same kind, were the excellent lessons, which this illustrious pupil, previously gave to his master; and by which, without losing any benefit of his instructions, he kept himself above contempt.

His good sense, exemplified,

His reticence to Mecca.

Besides, the pilgrimage on foot, performed by *Harun* to *Mecca*, he went seven or eight other pilgrimages, to the same city, but always in a magnificent manner, and attended, by no fewer than a hundred learned persons, for the sake of their conversation and advice. As his health, was very precarious, when he could not in person make the pilgrimage, he gave appointments for three hundred persons, to make it for him. He was punctual and regular in his devotions, when his health permitted him, and he expended about a hundred pound sterling, every day, in charity. In reading the works of the most eminent poets, he was sometimes so much touched, that he was seen to cry.

His charity.

His oeconomy and magnificence.

The same *Melec*, the aged doctor, of whom he was so fond, used to caution him against making too great a secret of learning, which, he said, ought not to be monopolized, by the great; but diffused through all. The oeconomy of his court, was regular, and every thing about him was so polite, and splendid, that the *Arabs* to this day, talk of his reign, as the reign of miracles, and magnificence; and have exhausted upon it, all their luxuriancy of fancy, and imagination. According to them, his ministers, his courtiers,

courtiers, and his judges, were all of them formed upon his model ; and were as extraordinary men as himself, and his favourite wife *Zebeide*, had next to himself, the greatest share in contributing to the wonders of his reign.

In the 180th year of the Hejra, being that in which *Harun* undertook the expedition into *Lycaonia*, he was seized with an apoplectic fit. A consultation of physicians being held in his palace, at which his two sons were present ; *Gabriel*, his famous physician, pronounced him to be a dead man, unless he was instantly blooded. This operation was opposed, by his second son *Al Amin*, who was declared the heir of his empire ; but he was overruled by *Al Mamun*, the eldest son ; and a vein being immediately opened, the califf recovered. This incident gave *Al Mamun* the preference in his father's affections, which had afterwards a vast effect in his favour, and he settled upon his physician *Gabriel*, a pension of near ten thousand pound sterling, a year ; for having saved his life. It was at this time, and perhaps owing to this accident, that, according to the Christian historians, the *Greeks* defeated, near *Antioch*, a great body of the califf's troops. But next year the *Arabs* had their revenge, by invading the imperial territories in their turn, and penetrating as far as *Amonum*, in *Phrygia*, committing as usual, vast ravages upon the inhabitants, without acquiring any solid advantages to themselves.

Though, as has already been observed, *Harun* was too wise to have any concern in the wars of Europe, yet a prince who now appeared in the West, drew upon him *Harun's* attention. This was the famous *Charles*, so well known by the name of *Charlemain*, or *Charles* the great, the son of *Pepin*. That great warrior, equally formidable, for his ambition, success, strength of body, and vigour of mind, put an end to the kingdom of the *Lombards*, in *Italy*, and procured himself to be crowned king there ; but *Rome* still owned the *Greek* emperor, for her sovereign. *Charlemain*, during this conquest, found the Pope so serviceable to his interest, that he bestowed many favours upon the Holy See ; though it was at that time, subject to the *Greek* empire. He was now master of *Italy*, *France*, *Germany*, and a great part of *Spain*, where he carried on a war very successfully against the *Saracens* ; so that in fact, he was almost as powerful in the West, as the califf was in the East. As *Charles*, had no reason to be well pleased with the empress *Irene*, or with the emperor *Nicephorus*, who succeeded to the imperial throne, his friendship, was of great consequence to *Harun*, who this year, sent him a most magnificent embassy, accompanied with many valuable presents, all which were favourably received by *Charles*, but we know not of any particular treaty that was concluded between them. The subsequent events of the califat, as well as of the western empire,

empire, seem however to indicate, that the correspondence was not dropt on either side.

Who in-
vades the
Moslems in
Spain.

One of the *Arab* Emirs, or great lords, whose name was *Ibna Sarabi*, about this time declared himself independent of *Haken*, with regard to the provinces he possessed in *Spain*, and came with a great number of his friends to *Paterborn*, in *Westphalia*, where *Charles* then was, and offered to put himself under his protection. *Charles*, without making use of any efforts we know of, to convert this emir to christianity, accepted of his submission, and in the year of God 778, he raised a great army, which he divided into two bodies, both which penetrated into *Spain*. The one entered it by the way of *Roussillon*, and took *Saragosa* without any resistance, and all the country on that side the *Ebro*. The other division, which was led by *Charlemain*, in person, entered *Spain* on the side of *Navarre*, and after a long siege, he became master of *Pampaluna*. According to some historians, his successes were in a great measure owing to the valour of the *French* in his army, and *Charles*, caused *Ibna Sarabi*, to be proclaimed, the califf of the West, upon his yielding him homage, for all the lands he held; between the *Ebro*, and the *Pyrenean* mountains. But this was not effected without infinite loss, and great disgrace to *Charles*. In his march towards the *Ebro*, his troops had been so oppressive to the country people, that they conspired with the *Moslems* against him, and rushing on a sudden from the rocks, and fell with so much fury, on his rear, at the pass of *Roncevalles*, that they cut it off, with some of *Charles's* best officers; amongst whom was the famous *Roland*, or *Orlando*, the subject of so many romances, and poems. But, to return to the affairs of the eastern califat.

Harun's
wars with
the *Turks*.

The *Turks*, under their *Kakan*, continued still very powerful about the *Caspian* sea, and that prince, pretending still to resent the death of his daughter, who had been betrothed to *Barmac*, and as he alledged poisoned, by him in the 172d. year of the *Hegira*, made a most dreadful irruption into the territories of the califf, and after carrying fire and sword, through several provinces, he retired to his own country, with one hundred thousand captives. The califf's general, called *Abimelec*, took his revenge by making an irruption into the provinces of *Galecia*, and *Capadocia*, and so thoroughly at variance were, *Harun*, and the empress *Irene*, that all means to accommodate matters between them proved ineffectual. This produced fresh hostilities on both sides; *Abimelec* renewed his incursions, and proceeded so near the imperial court, that he seized the stud of horses, which was allotted for the use of the empress herself, who had now recovered her influence in the affairs of the empire. In short, the califf's troops, proved every where victorious; they ravaged all *Lydia*, and one of the imperial generals,

Harun in-
vades the
Greek do-
minions.

was

was defeated in a bloody battle, in which he lost all his baggage, and a great number of general officers. Those successes gave the califf once more an opportunity of trying to recover his authority in *Africa*, and consequently of opening an easy communication with *Spain*, and he sent *Ibrahim* one of his emir's to be governor of all the territories that remained to him in *Africa*, but it is probable, that the vast governor power, which *Charlemain* had now acquired in *Europe*, dis-appointed him in his views. to *Affrick*.

Al Amin, was now in the 15th year of his age, which in the eastern countries is considered amongst sovereign princes, as a year of majority, and his name is found inscribed in some dirhems that were found in the ruins of *Samarcand*, where they were coined; a capital city in the califf's dominions. But *Harun*, though he did not alter the order of succession, having, as has been before observed, conceived a great affection for *Al Maimun*, began now to think of rendering the latter, as little dependent as he could upon the former; who had discovered a propensity to all kind of vice, and idleness. Were we to hazard a conjecture, we should think that the party in favour of *Al Amin*'s succession, was so powerful in the empire, that the califf could not set it aside without hazarding a civil war; not to mention that the act itself, had been by the califf solemnly hung up in the *Kaaba*; and thus it became sacred in the eyes of all true *Moslems*. But previous to his putting his intentions into execution, he put to death, *Musa*, one of the heads of the family of *Ali*, whom he had thrown into prison, and who left behind him eighteen sons, and twenty-three daughters. *Harun* then, undertook another pilgrimage to *Mecca*, more magnificent than any he had yet performed, with a view, no doubt, of conciliating his subjects, to the measure he had in view. For soon after, he made *Al Amin*, his governor of *Syria*, *Irak*, all *Arabia*, *Mesopotamia*, *Assyria*, *Media*, *Palestine*, *Egypt*, and all that part of *Africa*, that still was subject to the califat. Upon *Al Mamun*, he bestowed the government of *Persia*, *Kerman*, *India*, *Korasan*, *Taberstan*, *Cabdestan*, *Zabdestan*, and *Marwainah*, a province of prodigious extent. He likewise introduced into the succession, a third son he had, named *Al Kasan*, to whom he gave the government of *Armenia*, *Natolia*, *Georgia*, *Circassia*, and all the vast tracts of lands, which he or his predecessors had conquered, near the *Euxine* sea. It would break too much into the thread of this history, to enter upon the geography of all those vast dominions, which shall be explained by itself. But the reader, from the partition that is here exhibited, can easily form to himself, some idea, of the power of this mighty prince: no empire in the world, being now comparable to his. We are not however to forget, that notwithstanding this partition of power, amongst his sons,

Harun's
affection
for his
brother.

His mag-
nificent
pilgrimage to
Mecca.

Settles the
succession.
anew.

His vast
dominions

Al

Al Amin was still to retain the title of califf, and *Al Kasir* was declared to be next in succession to *Al Maimun*.

Particu-
lars relat-
ing to the
Barmac
family.

Probable
reasonings
why *Harun*
de-
stroyed
them.

Extraor-
dinary
story of
Harun.

Particu-
lars of the
destruc-
tion of the
Barmac
family.

This great point being thus settled, *Harun* proceeded to an act of the greatest importance; but whether it was of justice or tyranny, we are in the dark. The family of *Barmac*, had been the great instruments of his power, and it is probable, that, owing them obligations he could not repay, but could not disown, he sought to secure the tranquillity of his family, by destroying them all, though they were the authors of his own preservation, and greatness. They were men the most respected of any in the empire, for generosity, honour, and every virtue, that could adorn society; and their memory to this day, under the name of the *Barmacides*, is revered in many of the eastern countries, and celebrated by all their historians. *Harun*, like other great men of his rank, seems to have had no notion of gratitude, or any other virtue, that came in competition with power. The name of the great minister of that family was *Jaafar*, or, as it is sometimes wrote, *Giafar*. Some historians, with great likelihood of truth, tell us, that when *Yahya*, the same who has been already mentioned, and who surrendered to *Fade*, was brought upon the faith of that compromise to *Bagdad*, the califf, instead of fulfilling his promise, determined to imprison him; but in the mean time, committed him to the care of *Jaafar*, who, detesting such a proceeding, not only suffered *Yahya* to escape, but furnished him with money, and the means of reaching a place of safety. This proceeding, was too humane, and generous, for *Harun* to seem to condemn it; he even appeared to approve of it; but from that time, it is probable, that he had formed a resolution to get rid of a minister, who could prefer the dictates of justice, and humanity, to obedience. Some authors mention another cause, that contributed to *Jaafar*'s ruin. The califf, they say, having either a criminal passion or violent affection for his sister, *Ablasa*, and at the same time, a most tender friendship for his minister, married them together, or rather, ordered them to live together as man and wife, to all outward appearance, but without enjoying any of the rights of matrimony, under pain of death and his displeasure. His extravagance, we are told, was owing to the desire the califf had to be always in company with them together. *Jaafar* however, being young and amorous, violated his master's injunctions, so far, that he got his nominal wife with child, of twins, which, notwithstanding the precaution he took to send them privately to *Mecca*, came to the ears of the califf; who resented it so much, that he ordered *Jaafar* to be beheaded; and his father, and his brother *Fade*, to be thrown into prison at *Al Rakka*. The sentence of death was executed, by *Masru*, before the califf's own palace, the criminal being then no more

more than thirty-seven years of age. His mother, who had given suck to *Harun*, and was greatly respected by him, interceded in the most moving manner, in their favour. But all was to no purpose, for they were kept prisoners, for seventeen years; their effects were seized upon, all over the califat, and the califf's resentment went so far, that he published the edict, commanding that, none of his subjects, should, under pain of death, make mention of the *Barmac* family. As to *Abbasa*, the califf is said to have been under great agonies on her account, but at last ordered her, and her two children, to be buried alive in a pit.

Though the laws of history oblige us to mention these particulars, yet it does violence to credibility, to imagine, that a prince of *Harun*'s justice and magnanimity, should not have other reasons, for the severity, if not the barbarity of those executions; tho' perhaps they might be equally unjustifiable. The truth is, *Barmac*, or the *Barmace* family, were at this time, in point of splendour, and riches, inferior to few sovereign princes; and the general belief of the people of the East was, that they were descended from the antient kings of *Persia*. One of the family, likewise having been affianced to the daughter of the *Kakan*, *Harun*'s great and inveterate enemy, contributed perhaps to their down-fall. We are to add to this, that they pretended, in imitation of the *Hesham* family at *Mecca*, to have been the builders and owners of the magnificent mosque, at *Balk*; the antient *Baetra*, one of the greatest cities in *Korasan*; which mosque, exceeded the magnificence, and the splendour, of the *Kaaba* itself. All those circumstances, together with the prodigious popularity of the *Barmac* family, might well contribute to its ruin, under a prince, jealous of his authority, without our having recourse to improbabilities.

But it is not in the power of the most despotic sovereign, to change the inward sentiments of their subjects. The virtues of old *Yahya*, the protector and tutor of the califf's youth; and the founder of his fortune, together with those of his four sons, rose after their ruin, with greater force, to the minds of the people, than they had ever done during the time of their prosperity; so that *Harun* found the edict he had issued against them to be ineffectual, if not prejudicial to his purpose. An instance of this we have in the conduct of one *Mondir*, an old man, who erected a kind of a stage, before the ruins of one of the *Barmac*'s houses, upon which he used to pronounce to the people, a panegyric upon the virtues of that family. This coming to the califf's ears, he ordered the old man to be dragged before him, and he condemned him to death. This sentence was so far from intimidating *Mondir*, that he launched out more boldly than ever, in the praises of his beloved family. His behaviour, and perhaps the truth of what he said, struck the califf so forceably, that he not only retracted his sentence, but gave

Generosity of the califf.

His wars with *Nicephorus* the Greek emperor.

His influence to *Harun*.

Extraordinary proof of *Harun's* strength.

gave *Mondir* a present of a very rich gold cup he then had in use. Behold, sir, said the brave old man, to the califf, in kissing his hand that stretched out the cup, a fresh obligation I am under to the house of *Barmac*. We are told, that *Mahomet*, the son of *Yabya*, was not upon this occasion, involved in the ruin of his family; though his brother *Jasfar's* body, was treated by the califf's order, with the utmost indignity.

Nicephorus, the emperor of *Constantinople*, had about this time shut up the ambitious empress *Irene*, in a monastery of her own building, and had concluded a peace, with the emperor *Charles* the great, to whom *Harun*, had offered the property of mount *Calvary*, and our Saviour's sepulchre at *Jerusalem*: a bribe, which in those days of superstition, was looked upon, as being beyond even that of a crown. But *Charles* was superior to such weaknesses, and was now employed in settling his great empire of the West. With this view it was that he did not discourage an alliance with the Greek emperors, from whom he had obtained many valuable possessions, and privileges; and particularly, that of being recognized emperor of the West, and of all *Italy*. *Nicephorus*, having strengthened himself with this important alliance, in the 187th year of the Hejra, which answers to the 803d year of God, according to the Moslem authors, though the *Greeks* fix the date more early, sent an ambassador, with a kind of defiance to the califf, refusing to continue the payment of the tribute that had been agreed to by the empress *Irene*; and demanding, that all that had been paid, should be returned. The califf, having but a little time before, renewed the treaty, by which the subsidy was continued, was terribly exasperated at this demand, and the more so, when the Greek ambassador, offered him some swords in a present. It is here proper to acquaint the reader, that *Damascus*, *Arabia Felix*, called *Yaman*, and other countries under the califf, had been always remarkable, for the finest manufactures of steel, in the world; and the great families, or tribes there, were so curious as to the temper, and keenness of their swords, that they were transmitted from father to son, as family jewels; and they had particular names allotted them by their owners. *Harun* had got the possession of one of those swords called *Samsamah*, which was famous for its excellency over all others in the world. Add to this, that the califf himself, was remarkable for his strength, and dexterity in arms. Highly provoked with the insolent demand, and the defiance that had been sent him by the emperor, he took the swords from the ambassador; and before his face cut them in pieces with his *Samsamah*, as if they had been so many bulrushes. This story, will not appear very incredible to the reader, who knows the excellency of the Sabres manufactured to this day, in those parts.

To second this mark of his indignation, and to prevent the emperor, who threatned an invasion of his dominions; vades the the califf immediately, assembling his army, marched *Greek* em- through the imperial territories, and spreading desolation pite. wherever he came, he proceeded as far, as *Heraclea*, a city situated on a branch of the Euxine sea, to which he laid *Forces Ni-* liege. *Nicephorus*, now trembled for *Constantinople* itself, *cephorus to* and sent to propose a peace, offering to renew the pay- a peace. ment of the annual tribute. As winter was at hand, and the califf was at a great distance from his dominions, he accepted of the emperor's offers; and drew off his army towards *Alraka*. But *Nicephorus*, was no sooner free from the danger, than he grew as insolent as ever, in hopes that the severity of the season, would prevent the califf's return. But he was mistaken, and according to the *Greek* historians themselves, he received in person, a shameful defeat from *Harun*, who obliged him again to renew his subsidy treaty, Treache- and even to pay, all the arrears of it that were due. But ry of the *Nicephorus* regarded his faith no longer than his danger latter, who was impending, and the califf had no sooner left his terri- is defeat- tories, than he made vast preparations, for invading the ed. califat, in his turn.

It appears, upon this occasion, pretty extraordinary, that Reasons the califf, while he was superior in the field, should so often for *Ha-* trust to the faith, of so perfidious a prince, as *Nicephorus* *run's* leni- appears to have been. In answer to this, it is most natural ty. to think that the califf was influenced by apprehensions of some commotions, which began to appear, and afterwards, broke out in *Korasan*, and other provinces of his empire. It is likewise reasonable to suppose, that the power of *Charles* the Great, to which the califf was no stranger, had great weight with him; especially as he was then in strict alliance with the *Greek* emperor.

Be this as it will, it is certain, that the califf, was not He totally wanting to himself, for, in the spring of the 188th year defeats of the Hejra, he once more invaded the imperial dominions, *Nicepho-* and penetrating as far, as *Sassaf*, in *Natolia*, which he took, *rus.* he was there encountered by *Nicephorus* himself, at the head of a great army, but far inferior to that of the califf, Great ar- if we are to believe the *Greek* historians, who say, that my of the the *Moslems*, in this invasion, amounted to three hundred califf. thousand. It is however, universally agreed, that after a bloody battle, *Nicephorus* was totally defeated, with the loss of forty thousand of his soldiers, besides being himself, wounded, in three different places. After so important an action, the califf and his army returned home, with the immense plunder they had acquired. The remaining part of this year seems to have been spent by the califf in providing for the peace of his dominions; by the changes he made of their governors, particularly those of *Egypt*. It is

is however, hard to reconcile the partition which he had made of his dominions among his three sons, with those removals; unless we suppose that the partition was not to take place, till his death, or that the power they held, was no more than nominal, and that the califf reserved to himself, the appointment of the acting governors. Whatever may be in this, *Harun*, in the 189th of the Hejra, having settled every thing in his dominions according to his mind, sent a body of troops to invade *Phrygia*, where they defeated, an army sent against them by the *Greek* emperor; but nothing else seems to have been performed decisive this

Hej. 190. year. Next year however, *Harun*, once more entered the imperial territories, with an army, consisting of no fewer, than one hundred and thirty-five thousand regular troops, besides volunteers and irregulars. He likewise fitted out a very strong fleet, which was destined to make a descent upon the island of *Cyprus*. The first operation of his land troops, was against *Heraclea*, the same city which he had besieged before, and which he now not only took but reduced to ashes; and carried sixteen thousand of the inhabitants along with him, in chains. He then proceeded, to make himself master of many other towns, and undoubtedly, would have taken *Constantinople* itself; had not a rebellion, which broke out at this time in his own territories, prevented it. He however, obliged the emperor *Nicephorus*, to renew his submissions for a peace, which he granted him, upon condition, that *Heraclea*, and the other places taken and destroyed by the *Moslems*, never should be rebuilt; and that the emperor, should pay thirty thousand pieces of gold, with his own head stampt upon them, annually to the califf, and three thousand with the head of his son; whom he had made his associate in the empire. This seems to have been a refinement of pride, in the califf, whose coin never bore any heads, that he and his subjects, might have a kind of secret triumph over their vassal, always when they looked upon his coin. Before this treaty was concluded, we are told, that the califf had advanced as far as *Ansyra*, the capital of *Galatia*, the fortifications of which he only surveyed; but that the whole neighbouring countries, were over-run with his troops, who carried desolation wherever they spread. But this treaty, being, like all the others, broken by the *Greek* emperor, the califf not only repossessed himself, of all the places he had abandoned, but ordering his fleet to proceed in a descent, upon *Cyprus*, with a great number of land troops on board, he entirely reduced that island, demolished the churches, wherever he came, and carried vast numbers of the inhabitants into captivity. *Nicephorus*, according to *Theophanes*, the *Greek* historian, had at this time a dependence upon the success of a body of troops, which he had sent to make a diversion, into the

califf's

Harun
takes and
burns *He-*
raclea,
his suc-
cesses
force *Ni-*
cephorus to
an igno-
minious
peace.

Harun
conquers
Cyprus.

califf's dominions; but with so little success, that most of them perished miserably in the expedition,

Notwithstanding all those glorious conquests of *Harun*, And^r re- his affairs at home, were now in such a situation, as abso- turns lutely demanded his presence there. He was therefore in a home- manner compelled, once more to trust to the faith of *Ni- cephorus*, and having renewed the subsidy treaty with him, he returned home to his own dominions, where he found every thing in disorder. One *Rafa*, the son of *Leit*, was in actual rebellion against the califf, at this time; and hav- ing made himself master of *Samarkand*, he advanced to *Ko- rasan*, of which the califf bestowed the government upon one *Hazima*, who sent his predecessor *Ali*, in chains to the califf, on account of the tyranny, and oppressions he had been guilty of in his government. It appears likewise, tho' it is not expressly taken notice of, by the Moslem historians, that the long absence of the califf, had encouraged *Al Amin*, his presumptive heir, to endeavour to dispossess his brother, *Al Mamun*, of the governments that had been allotted him. In the mean while, *Rafa*, advanced towards *Korasán*, against *Al Amin*, who was endeavouring to supplant his brother in that province; but the califf being now returned from his *Greek* expedition, reconciled his three sons, so far, that they attended him in his last pilgrimage, to *Miecca*; where, as well as at *Medina*, he was unusually generous, in his alms to the poor. Upon his return, finding that *Rafa*, had made a dangerous progress in *Korasán*, he ordered the army he brought back from *Greece*, to assemble near *Kaka*, from whence he marched them to *Bagdad*, where they were pro- vided with every thing necessary, for their proceeding against the rebels. The differences that had arisen between his two sons, seems at this time, to have greatly affected the califf's spirits. For, when he was at *Raka*, he dreamed, according to one of the *Persian* historians, who are gene- rally very much upon the marvellous, that he saw a hand holding forth, some red earth, and that he heard a voice pronouncing, that such was the earth, in which he was to be interred, at *Tus*, a city of great note in *Korasán*. Though this might be a fiction, yet it is certain, the califf was at this time so much oppressed with gloomy appre- hensions, that he consulted, with his favourite physician *Gabriel*, upon the state of his health. *Gabriel*, very pro- perly told him, that his oppression was owing to his vast fatigues, and the great load of business in which he was en- gaged; and advised him by all means, to take some relaxa- tion, by pursuing those amusements, that were proper to expel it. The califf, upon this, gave his principal offi- cers a magnificent entertainment, which lasted for some days, and then pursued his march, to the head of his army, into the district of *Jorjan*, where a bloody-flux seized him, with so much violence, that he was obliged to discontinue his

Harun is attacked by a bloody-flux. His dependency and superstition.

his march; and after committing the care of his army to *Al Mansur*, he returned to *Tus*. Here we are told, that he dispatched his favourite eunuch, *Masru*, the same who had beheaded *Jaafar*, for a handful of the earth, from the soil of the neighbourhood. Upon *Masru*'s return, and presenting it, with his arm half bare, the califf; when he saw that the earth was red, immediately told his physician *Gabriel*, that he was a dead man, and that the earth and the arm, were the same he had seen in his dream. His distemper after this, returned with double violence. When his recovery was desperate, *Bashir*, the brother of *Rase* the rebel, was brought before him a prisoner, and the califf saying; that had he strength only to pronounce two words, they should be, "kill him," upon which *Bashir* was put to death in his presence.

Hej. 193.
A.D. 808.
His death person and character.

Soon after, in the 193d of the Hejra, which answers to the year of God, 808, this great califf died, when he was about forty-seven years of age, and after reigning about twenty-three. His complexion was fair, his face amiable, his person tall, and portly, his hair which was beginning to turn grey, was thick and bushy, and his beard black. Notwithstanding all that has been said of his virtues, some of his actions, if what is recorded of them be true, are not reconcilable to humanity. As a man, he seems to have been inquisitive, and sometimes factious, and he never appeared in so great lustre, as when he sat to distribute justice in person, to the meanest subjects. A woman, complaining to him once, that his soldiers had done great damage, to her grounds, in their march, the califf put her in mind, that it is said in the koran, that when the armies of great princes go forth, the subjects through whose fields they pass, must suffer. Yes, sir, replied she, but it is said in the same book, that the habitations of those princes, who authorize injustice, shall be rendered desolate. This seasonable bold remonstrance, affected the califf so much, that he ordered the woman to be indemnified for all her losses.

Examples of his patience, and moderation.

Though his empress *Zebeide*, had such an ascendancy over him, that he left her son, his successor, in prejudice of his elder brother, a much more deserving prince, yet he knew how to make a proper distinction; between the two; and he seems to have taken such measures, as were most proper to reinstate *Al Maimun*, in his birth right. *Al Amin*, being one day very importunate, for his punishing a man severely, who had spoken with great indecency of his mother, the califf seemed to be at a loss as to the punishment he should inflict. But son, added he, if you cannot prevail on yourself, as a prince of spirit and generosity, ought to do, to forgive the fellow, my advice is, that you should treat him in his own way, and speak as much ill of his mother, as he has done of yours.

The *Mahometans* in general, have a great veneration for Story of those who are natural idiots; and believe, that though they an idiot. cannot understand it, there is some what divinely myf- terious in all they say. But this principle renders them ob- noxious to great impositions; because, many people who are in their senses, in order to procure themselves an extraor- dinary degree of reverence, pretend to be natural idiots; when they are discovered, they are severely punished. Aman at *Bagdad*, who either was, or affected to be a fool, pretended to be God Almighty, and *Harun* hearing of him, commanded he should be brought before him; that he might sift out of him the truth. I ordered, said the califf, the other day, a fellow who pretended to be a prophet sent by God Almighty, and seemed to be a fool, to be tried; and he appearing to be an impostor, his head was struck off by my command. You did right, replied the fool, and like a worthy servant of mine, for I never gave that fellow any commission to be a prophet. This ready answer, left the califf, so much at a loss how to judge in the matter, that the fool was dismissed.

It has been observed more than once, in the history of Sends a this califf, that he was particularly jealous of his governors slave to of *Egypt*; and that he very frequently removed and re- govern placed them. This, no doubt, was occasioned partly for *Egypt*. the reasons already assigned, and partly on the account of the difficulty of governing so proud, and so mutinous a people, as the *Egyptians* were. In order to humble them, he once took it into his head, to order an Ethiopian slave, one *Hozeib*, to be governor of *Egypt*; giving for his reason, that one of the old kings of *Egypt*, had boasted, that he was God Almighty. As the *Ethiôpians* were held in the utmost contempt, by all the *Moslems*, who seldom employed them but as slaves, this would have been a dangerous piece of humour, in *Harun*, had he not known that *Hozeib*, was possessed of such qualities, as fitted him to be a proper go- vernor for such a people. As an instance of this, we are told, that when the *Egyptians*, (seemingly very absurdly) complained to their governor, that an inundation of the Nile had carried away all the cotton they had sown, on the banks of that river; he asked them, in a dry surly manner, why they had not sown wool there instead of cot- ton.

Such are all the particulars, that with any appearance General of credibility, or certainty, have been transmitted to us reflection of this mighty emperor. It is greatly to be lamented by upon the posterity, that amongst all the men of learning he so great- reign of ly encouraged, he employed none to write the particulars *Al Rashid* of his glorious reign. That somewhat of that kind was done is plain, from the few that have come to our hand, and by the exact mention we have of his great officers of state, Vol. VI. Z

state, and the learned men of his court. But all we know of the former, excepting a few, are their names, and most accounts we have of the latter, relate only to their labours about the unintelligible *Fargon* of their own religion, and the pains they have taken to render some parts of it reconcilable to common honesty, or common sense; all which must be highly disagreeable to the *English* reader.

*Al Amin, son and successor, to Al Rashid the great,
of the house of Al Abbas.*

*Al Amin
takes up
arms a-
gainst his
brother.*

*Moderation of
Al Mamun*

Al Amin, as we have already seen, was in arms against his brother, before their father's death; which makes it probable that *Al Rashid's* state of health, had been long desperate before he died. *Al Mamun*, satisfied with the perpetual government of the countries, that had been allotted him by his father, would have been contented to have left to his brother, the title of califf. But *Al Amin*, had a son of his own, named *Musa*, and upon his accession to the califat, he resigned himself intirely to flatterers, and ministers, enemies to *Al Mamun*, whom, they represented as having made himself, by means of his great abilities, the sovereign of *Korasan*, and the dangerous rival of his power. Upon this, *Al Fadh*, was ordered to march suddenly into *Korasan*, at the head of an army, and to dispossess his brother, not only of that government, but of all his effects, and houses there, which had been expressly left him, by the will of the califf. Though *Al Mamun*, was far from being void of ambition, yet he was too great a politician to be ignorant of the dangers with which he was beset. *Rase*, had made himself master of part of *Korasan*, and had actually arrogated to himself, the appellation of califf; and a great number of the inhabitants joined him. On the other hand, he knew the vast power of *Al Amin*, and the regard the public had to the will of *Al Rashid*, which appointed him to be the sovereign lord of the califat. He was therefore wise enough to temporize, so far, that he immediately obliged the people of his government to recognize *Al Amin*, as califf, and he opposed nothing to his general *Fadh*, but remonstrances, upon the wrong that was intended him; and of his readiness to obey his father's will, while his brother was violating it with regard to him, in every respect. *Fadh*, had no regard to those remonstrances; and proceeded to execute the califf's orders. In the mean while, *Al Amin*, was impolitic enough to order *Al Mamun* to repair to him at *Bagdad*; under pretence of wanting to consult with him upon state affairs.

Al Mamun, instead of complying with this order, appealed to the public, upon the notorious violation of the late califf's will, for *Al Amin* had by this time declared his son *Musa*, his successor in the califat. This young prince was but five years old, and his father, in imitation of other eastern nations, gave him the pompous title, of "one who reasons by the grace of God." The people however, who began now to have a contempt for *Al Amin*, on account of his indolence and debauchery, ridiculed his son, by the appellation of "the prince, who begins to speak by the grace of God," which is better expressed by two words in the *Arabic*. *Al Amin*, likewise ordered his brother *Al Mamun*'s name to be omitted in the public prayers, and *Musa*'s to be inserted in its room, as his next heir, by which his subjects were no longer in doubt of the injustice towards *Al Mamun*.

The latter, taking advantage of the public indignation, immediately put himself at the head of his troops, cut off all communication between *Korasan* and *Bagdad*, asserted the validity of his father's will, struck money in his own name, without mentioning that of *Al Amin*, and performed other acts of sovereignty. Perhaps he would have not ventured upon those bold steps, had he not found means to bring over to his party, the rebel *Rafe*, who commanded a large body of troops, and *Harthamah*, a man of great interest in those parts, and probably the same who was commissioned by *Al Hadi*, to murder *Al Rashid*, though *Harthamah*'s son, about the same time, was appointed *Al Amin*'s governor of *Egypt*. After this vast accession of strength, *Al Mamun* kept no farther measures with his brother. Hostilities commenced, and the confines of *Syria* and *Korasan*, became frightful scenes of devastation, and bloodshed. It appears from many passages in the Moslem authors, but chiefly from comparing the dates of those dirhems, which are in the cabinets of the curious, with facts, that every time they went into an expensive war, they made a new coinage of dirhems, and we accordingly find, that both parties set their mints to work on this occasion for the payment of their armies.

Matters seem to have been in a tumultuous uncertain state during all the 194th year of the *Hijra*, but next year became decisive of their high claims. *Ali*, the son of *Isa*, was declared general of *Al Amin*'s troops, and sent to invade *Korasan*, with sixty thousand men, of whom ten hundred were horse; but, with regard to this, the authors differ. It is certain however, that *Al Amin*'s court, upon this occasion, was full of confidence and presumption. *Zobeide*, the most haughty princess alive, on account of her beauty, descent, and marriage; before *Isa* set out upon his expedition, formally required him, to remember that *Al Mamun*, was the son of the great *Al Rashid*, and that consequently she

gained by
Al Ma-
mun.

regarded him as her own. That he should intimate to him the califf's orders, and give him three days to consider upon them; but that, if he did not comply with them in that time, he should bring him to *Bagdad* in silver chains. *Ali*, by his behaviour, appears to have been as presumptuous as *Zobeide*. He marched his army to *Ray*, a city on the frontiers of *Korasan*, where he encamped in a careless manner, trusting to the ground, which was very strong. *Al Mamun* gave the command of his troops to *Harthema*, and *Taber*, a general of consummate courage and abilities; and notwithstanding *Ali*'s advantageous situation, they marched undauntedly against him. *Ali* observing this, was so confident of victory, that he told his troops, it would be as easy for them to break the enemies army in pieces, as to march over the hill of *Hamadan*. This confidence destroyed him, for instead of making all the advantage, which he might have done, of his ground, he suffered himself to be attacked in his camp. An obstinate battle ensued, in which *Ali*'s troops repulsed the right and left wing of their enemies, but *Al Mamun*'s centre being composed of a choice body of cavalry, pushed that of *Ali*, so vigorously that the latter were intirely broken, and cut off from the two wings without a possibility of their rallying, *Al Mamun*'s centre then divided and attacked the wings of *Isa*'s army in their flanks. It was then that *Ali* himself was singled out by one *David*, who killed him, and cutting off his head, sent it to *Al Mamun*. The above is the best account, which from many jarring authorities, we have been able to give, of this important battle: But however they may differ in particulars, they agree in the main, as to what we have related.

Progress
of *Al Ma-*
mun's
arms,

checked.

Some authors, have insinuated, that *Al Mamun*, before this time had declared himself califf, nor is that at all improbable, for he had, before his victory, exercised several acts of independent sovereignty in *Korasan*. But upon receiving the news of his victory he was immediately proclaimed califf, and dividing his army between his two generals, whom he nobly rewarded for their services, ordered them to follow their blow. They accordingly marched into *Irah*, *Taber*, towards *Abwaz*, and *Harthema* towards *Holhan*; purposing to fall in with one another near *Bagdad*, and jointly to undertake the siege of that city. The califf had still an army in the field, but it was defeated. The progress of *Al Mamun*'s arms appears, however, to have received several checks this year. The rich province of *Karman* near *Korasan*, continued in the interest of *Al Amin*; We even find dirhems coined at *Mohamedia* the capital of that district, and though *Al Mamun*'s troops conquered *Hamaden*, yet, towards the end of the campaign, *Taber* was reduced to fortify his camp, and to act upon the de-

fensive

sensitive only. *Al Amin's* generals, seem not to have been able, either during this campaign, and the following winter; and nothing but the excessive indolence, and stupidity, of *Al Amin*, could have driven him from the Moslem throne. We have a remarkable instance of this, in the manner in which he received the news, of the defeat and death of his general *Ali*. For, the messenger sent to him, on that occasion, found him angling, and after he had imparted to him the fatal tidings, the califf ordered him to hold his peace; "for, said he, my freeman *Kuthar* here, has taken two fine fishes, and I not one."

Early next year, *Al Mamun*, impatient at the delays Another that had happened, ordered his generals to take the field, campaign, if possible, before those of *Al Amin* could oppose them. opens. *Taber*, continued still in the neighbourhood of *Holwan*, where he was joined by *Harthema*, who appears to have acted in subordination to *Taber*. As they were preparing to open the campaign, *Taber* understood that he was, in a manner, surrounded by two armies of twenty thousand men each, with which he was in no condition to encounter. He had however recourse on this occasion to stratagem, and learning that there was a misunderstanding between the two generals sent against him, he improved it so well, that instead of engaging their enemy, they destroyed one another. This gave *Taber* an opportunity of besieging and taking *Holwan*, which he did by capitulation, but was obliged to leave in it a strong garrison, under *Harthema*. He then marched towards *Alwaz*; but his army being weakened by the garrison he had left in *Holwan*, he was unable to dispossess a body of the califf's troops, that had taken post near that city. He repulsed them, however, so effectually, *Taber* that he made himself master of *Alwaz*, and then of the takes *Al*-important station of *Wasel* upon the Tygris, and after that *waz*. of *Al Madayen*, a city in the neighbourhood of *Bagdad* itself.

The people of *Bagdad*, were variously affected, according to those various successes. They were no strangers to the indolent life of their califf, whom they despised. Upon the first successes of *Al Mamun's* generals, and being spirited up, by *Al Hasan*, a man of great consequence amongst them, they formally deposed *Al Amin*, and threw his mother *Zobeide*, into prison. But *Al Amin's* affairs soon after tak- *Al Amin* ing a more favourable turn, they not only replaced him up- deposed on the throne, but secured *Al Hasan*, and brought him pri- but re- soner to the califf. That mean spirited prince, not knowing stored. *Al Hasan's* views, or not believing what was urged against him, offered him the command of his army, and furnished him with every thing necessary for him to make a glorious campaign. *Al Hasan*, being in the califf's power, seemingly accepted of his command, which he had no intention to execute. For, he no sooner had passed the Tygris, than

Al Hasan than he endeavoured to make his escape, but his treachery being discovered, *Al Amin* ordered a body of his troops to pursue him; and after a most obstinate defence, though attended only by two servants, both he and they were put to the sword. The unhappy *Al Amin*, finding himself thus betrayed and deserted on all sides, lost his spirit so much, that he began to entertain thoughts of surrendering himself into the hands of *Al Mamun*; who was, by this time, acknowledged as califf, by the *Egyptians*, *Syrians*, and all the *Arabs*. The important city of *Ispahan* opened its gates to his general *Taber*, and the whole province of *Far*, submitted to him at the same time.

Progress
of *Al Ma-*
mun,

Bagdad
besieged
by his ge-
nerals.

Al Amin's affairs, being thus desperate, in the 197th year of the *Hejra*, *Al Mamun's* two generals *Taber*, and *Harthema*, formed the junction they had proposed in the neighbourhood of *Bagdad*. We are here to observe, that, notwithstanding what we are told by Moslem and Persian authors, of the almost uninterrupted progress of *Al Mamun's* arms, it appears as if they had omitted many particulars. It was now the third if not the fourth year of the war, and *Bagdad*, which was the great object of *Al Mamun*, was not yet reduced; it is therefore reasonable to conclude, that *Al Amin's* generals, made a better defence for him than appears upon the face of our historians. The siege of *Bagdad* however was now formed, and *Al Amin*, from some circumstances that have not come to our hands, made so vigorous a defence, that it seems to have lasted for a whole year. It appears likewise that *Al Amin*, notwithstanding all his vices and failings, could upon this occasion, exert the virtues of his family. He defended, the eastern parts of *Bagdad*, called, the camp of *Al Mohdi*, till it was reduced to a heap of ruins around him; and then he retired to the western part, where he defended himself with equal obstinacy. But the garrison, and the inhabitants, who were very faithful to him, while he set them an example of courage, and activity; were greatly scandalized, when upon every respite he had from the alarms of the besiegers, they saw him and his favourite freeman, *Kuthar*, playing together at chess, a game, of which, he was fond to distraction.

Death of
the califf
Al Amin.

Al Mamun's two generals, *Taber*, and *Harthema*, were men of very opposite characters. *Harthema*, as the reader may already have observed, was far from being of a bloody disposition; but *Taber*, was in his nature, a second *Kaled*, brave, unrelenting, and cruel. *Al Amin*, was no stranger to the characters of both, and he entered into a treaty with *Harthema*, whose son, as we have seen, he had made governor of *Egypt*. This treaty, coming to the ears of *Taber*, he resented it as an indignity, done to his superiority in the command; and he resolved to render it ineffectual. We shall not trouble the reader with the dreams, prognostics, and omens, which *Al Amin* considered as the immediate

immediate forerunners of his destiny, and which, for some days before his death, happened, greatly dejected him. It is sufficient to say, that he and *Harthema*, had several private conferences together, and it was agreed, that *Al Amin* should embark with *Harthema*, in a small vessel, furnished by the latter; and that they should cross the Tygris, to the place where the troops of *Harthema*'s division were encamped. But *Taber*, having notice of their intention, planted some boats to intercept them, which sunk that in which they were. *Harthema*, escaped drowning by being drawn out of the river by the hair of his head; and the califf, who was in disguise, got to the shore, but he was so closely pursued by *Taber*'s soldiers, that he was taken, having nothing on him but a tattered cloak, his drawers, and his turban. Being carried to a house adjoining to the place where he was taken, probably that they might be sure as to his person, he was kept there till midnight, and some of *Taber*'s officers or soldiers, who knew him, coming in, immediately cut him to pieces with their scymeters, and carried his head to *Taber*, who was by this time master of *Bagdad*, where it was exposed to public view. *Taber* then sent it, with the ring, scepter, and other regalia of the califat, to *Al Mamun*, who resided all this while in *Korasan*; and he was so overjoyed with the sight, that he immediately prostrated himself, and ordered the messenger who brought it one hundred thousand pieces of gold, amounting to near one hundred thousand pounds, *English*; but this liberality, if true, probably was intended, for the benefit of others as well as of the courier.

Liberality
of *Al Ma-*
mun, on
receiving
the news
of it.

We have, in relating these circumstances of this califf's death, followed what seems to be most probable. Other accounts of equal authority only say, that *Al Amin* intending to throw himself into *Harthema*'s hands, was intercepted, by *Taber*'s soldiers, who sunk his boat, carried himself on shore, and after keeping him prisoner for some time, cut off his head.

This prince's reign from its commencement to its end, exhibited nothing but a scene of civil war and commotions, between him and his brother. He therefore, even tho' he had possessed them, had no opportunity of displaying civil virtues. He is blamed, by all historians, for his excessive indolence, for having in the beginning of his reign, abandoned the reins of government to *Al Fadol*, who was a man of abilities, but hated *Al Mamun*; and therefore gave his sovereign the pestilent advice, to alter the succession. He expended vast sums in purchasing eunuchs, of whom and his women, he was so fond, that he gave away amongst them all his jewels, and many other precious effects. We know of no men of genius he encouraged, excepting those who are called so in playing at chess. An amusement however, that

is very incompatible, with that excessive love of wine, of which he is accused by historians. Music was likewise a favourite diversion with him; and he had in his palace, a number of women, who excelled both in vocal, and instrumental; ten of whom, we are told were fine performers upon the lute, and used to entertain him in concert. To them, as well as to his chess players, he was generous, and allowed them pensions. In his person he was handsome, tall, and lusty. His complexion was fair, and his constitution robust. He was killed in the thirtieth year of his age, when he had reigned almost five years. We know of no other particulars of this prince, but that he had a particular fancy, of having the yachts he built upon the *Tygris*, constructed in the forms of animals, such as lions, dragons, horses, eagles, elephants, and the like.

Al Mamun, eldest son to the great califf Harun Al Rashid.

Al Mamun
succeeds
him.

The go-
vernment
of the pro-
vinces
settled.

TH E moment the death of *Al Amin* was known, the people of *Bagdad*, (the eastern division of which, was possessed by *Taber*, and the western by *Harthema*) proclaimed his brother *Al Mamun* califf. Another general, called *Hamid*, lay in the neighbourhood of the city with a third army. All those precautions seem to have been wisely designed to bridle the natural inconstancy of the people of *Bagdad*. The first measures of *Al Mamun*'s government were to settle the lieutenants of his provinces. *Taber* was removed from the government of *Irak*, to that of *Syria*, and *Mesopotamia*; and was succeeded by *Al Kasan*. *Ayad*, was succeeded in the lieutenancy of *Egypt* by *Matalleb*, but he was soon superseded by *Al Abbas*. All those removals were affected by the advice and direction of *Al Fadel* the son of *Sahal*. This nobleman had been long the favourite minister of *Mamun*, who seems in fact to have been too much under his influence. For being now possessed of the whole califat without a rival, *Al Mamun*, committed to him the prime viziership and he even bestowed upon him, the superb title of his first minister, both in civil and military affairs. The subjects of the califat, seeing the miseries which had happened in the late reign, from a ministerial government, did not relish a renewal of it in this. It would be perhaps refining too much, to suggest, that *Al Mamun* perceiving the unquiet state of his government raised *Al Fadel* to this invidious post not only for the great opinion he had of him, but that all the impopularity, which must

must necessarily attend his conduct, might fall upon the minister, and not upon the sovereign. But in reality, *Al Fadel* a prime does not seem to have been a minister of either virtues or minister. abilities equal to the momentous charge he undertook.

The first alarm, *Al Mamun* received in his government Hej. 169. was from the house of *Ali*, that fruitful source of opposition, A.D. 814. and rebellion to his family. A descendant of that house, *Mahomet* the son of *Tabatiba*, was then living at *Meru* in of the *Korasan*, and was highly respected, by vast numbers of true house of *Moslems*, as being the descendant, nay the representative, of *Ali*, under the prophet. *Mahomet* was not wanting to himself in two *Mahomet* improving those dispositions, and soon found means to meet. assemble together a great number of followers. He had, at the same time, the good fortune to meet with a general fit for his purpose. This was one *Abulsaraya*, who, sometime before had left the califf's service, and being disgusted with *Harthema*, had retired to *Cusa*, where on the first appearance of an insurrection he swore allegiance to *Mahomet*, as the prophet's representative, and was preferred to the command of his army, in which he greatly signaliz'd himself. He drove *Al Hasan's* deputy out of *Cusa*, and after beating all the califf's troops that were sent against him, he met with but a feeble resistance, in making himself master of the great city of *Basra*. The inaccuracy of the *Moslem* authors leave us greatly in the dark, as to the other particulars of this rebellion, which now grew so formidable, as to spread to the neighbourhood of *Bagdad*. All we can collect from it, is, that *Mahomet* dying, another *Mahomet* of the same house was acknowledged by the party. But the activity of *Hasan* and *Harthema* check'd the progress of *Abulsaraya* who continued to act as general for the new pretender, and obliged him to fly to *Cusa*. *Harthema* soon drove him out of that city, and a detachment of his troops took both *Mahomet* and him Suppressed prisoners. *Harthema*, who acted only as general for *Hasan*, sed by *Hasan* the governor of *Irah*, sent the prisoners to him; with all the *Hasan* and others of their party who had been taken. *Al Hasan* immediately ordered the head of *Abulsaraya* to be cut off, but sent *Mahomet* to *Al Mamun* at *Meru*. We are in the dark as to his fate, tho' from what afterwards happened it is probable that he was pardoned. But the rebellion of the house of *Ali*, was not the only one which at this time threatened the extinction of the government of *Al Mamun*, who seems to have been much better served, by his generals, than he was by his minister. *Damascus* was seiz'd, and *Palestine* Disorders of the calif- was overrun with rebels. One Usurper set up for himself in *Egypt*, and another in *Africa*; so that the whole califat was in a flame, in favour of two pretenders, *Ibrahim*, and *Mahomet*, who appeared in *Arabia*. [lifat.]

Harthema, who had been so active in suppressing the rebellions of the two *Mahomet*s, impelled by his zeal for the house death of of *Harthema*

of *Al Abbas*, flew to *Merv*, where the califf then kept his court, and throwing himself at his feet, gave him a description of the calamities of his empire, which he charged upon the dissingenuity of *Al Fadel* his minister, who kept him in the dark, as to the real situation of things. He conjured him, at the same time, to levy men, and to repair to *Bagdad*, as being the most central parts of his dominions, and the city, from which his orders might be most commodiously issued, to all parts of the empire. This honest zeal of *Harthema*, cost him dear. He was no match for the power of the minister, who accused him in his turn, of having fomented the rebellions under the two *Mahomets*. This recrimination was believed by the califf. *Harthema*, was severely bastinadoed, and thrown into prison, where his days were soon after ended, by an assassin, who acted by the minister's order. Such was the fate of a man, who had saved the life of the great *Al Rashid*; with the danger of his own, and who had performed, after that, the most signal services to his son, and his family.

Fadel in the interest of the house of *Ali*.

From the complexion of the Moslem history at this time, it appears pretty plainly, that the minister *Fadel*, had a strong bias towards the descendants of the house of *Ali*; either from a principle of conscience, or because they were then popular in the empire, or because he thought his master's throne could not be established in peace or security, unless they were gained over. It is certain, that *Al Mamun*, in the 201st year of the Hejra, adopted a very unaccountable system of government, which, was that of restoring the house of *Ali*, to the throne of the califat. For this purpose he pitched upon a young nobleman, *Ali* the son of *Musa*, and declared him his successor in the empire. He at the same time required all the governors and subjects of his provinces, to confirm this adoption, giving the highest commendations to *Ali*; whose memory is still held in the highest veneration, for his learning, piety, and virtue. *Al Mamun*, at the same time, was persuaded by his minister, that one great means of establishing the tranquility of his government, would be, to abolish the invidious distinction, introduced by the house of *Al Abbas*, of wearing black instead of green, the colour of the house of *Ali*. *Al Amun*, overpersuaded by his representations, ordered his soldiers and subjects, to wear green coloured cloaths, instead of black; and even ordered *Al Hajan* to march with a body of troops to from *Irak*, to support the execution of this edict at *Bagdad*; the califf, and to oblige the inhabitants to swear to the act of succession who declared in the person of *Ali*, who, by this time, was come to his court at *Merv*.

The plausible reasons, given by the minister for this mighty alteration in the system of the greatest empire upon earth, soon proved fallible, and their consequences destructive.

tive of what they were pretended to obtain. A moderate and a prudent accommodation, with the heads, and the principals of the house of *Ali*, might have been proper, and it would have been in the califf's power to have enforced it. But his late edicts met with an opposition which he could not surmount. The descendants of the house of *Al Abbas*, at this time, are said to have amounted to thirty thousand, but perhaps, this number is understood of their domestics as well as them. It is however certain, that they were very numerous, and very powerful, and they were joined by the *Hafshamites*, or the descendants from the house of *Hafsham*, before the birth of *Ali*. The heads of the party had frequent consultations, upon the means of preventing the califat from departing out of the house of *Al Abbas*. They prevailed so far that many of the city of *Bagdad*, and great part of the army refused obedience to the califf's orders, and in the beginning of the year, they declared *Ibrahim*, the son of *Mohdi*, to be califf. Had it not been for the firmness of *Al Hasan*, the governor of *Irak*, to *Al Mamun*'s government, that califf must, at this time, have been dethroned and destroyed; but *Al Hasan*, who still continued at *Bagdad*, made so brave a resistance against the rebels, that tho' they got possession of *Bagdad*, they could make no decisive progress, against *Al Mamun*. For tho' *Ibrahim* by the plausible speeches he daily made to the people, got possession of *Cufa*, and its district, yet the bulk of the people laying upon the minister the blame of the false steps the califf had made, continued, in their own minds, well affected, to the eldest son of *Harun*.

who is recognized califf.

Al Mamun seems not to have been void of blame, in bringing himself to the precipice, on which he now stood. *Meru*, was his favourite residence. He had a greater turn than ever his father had, for learning and learned men; and to this he gave, perhaps, too much of that time, which ought to have been allotted to the affairs of government. He had early imbibed the love of literature, which he extended much farther than any *Moslem* had ever done. Being endued with every quality necessary for his high station, he at last, opened his ears to the voice of his people, against his minister *Al Fadel*, as being the author of all the public distractions. *Al Mamun* immediately left *Meru*, and put himself at the head of the *Irakians*, who, by means of *Halan*, still continued unshaken in their allegiance to him; and set out on his march for *Bagdad*. When he came to a place called *Sarkhas*, his minister *Fadel* was found murdered in a bath, and the califf expressed so much horror at the action, that he ordered the murderer to be put to death. The *Persian* historians say, that he himself employed the assassin; but this is not probable, tho' little doubt is to be made, that the murder was committed, by some of his

zealous

zealous subjects, and perhaps by his connivance. Had he directly employed assassins, the thing could not have been concealed, and it must have exasperated *Fadel's* brother, *Hasan*, upon whom his great dependance at this time rested; but who, by his perseverance, and his duty, appears to have believed the califf to be innocent.

Hej. 203. Another incident which happened soon after, in the
A.D. 818. 203d year of the Hejra, contributed still farther to *Al Ma-*
and of *Ali. mun's* restoration, for his adopted son and successor, *Ali* died
at *Tus*, in *Korasan*, of a surfeit by eating too many grapes, a term that, among the *Persians*, often disguises the common practice of poisoning. There seems to be no charge brought against the califf, for the death of this young prince, who is said to have been most amiable in his manners, but it is certain that his death was very seasonable in that crisis of *Al Mamun's* affairs. He expressed his regard for the deceased, by ordering him to be interred near the burying place of his father, the great *Al Rashid*; who died in the same city, where the califf stayed for some time, till he should see how those great events would operate in his favour.

Al Mamun They had all the effects he could desire. The heads of
restored. the house of *Al Abbas*, the people, and the soldiery, in and about *Bagdad*, perceiving the chief objects of the revolt, to be now removed, thought of returning to their duty; and after some commotion, *Ibrahim* was formally deposed from his califat, which he had enjoyed for almost two years. He seems to have been but ill fitted for supporting that great dignity; for, upon his being deposed, he retired to a lurking hole in *Bagdad*, where he remained obscure for almost seven years.

Al Mamun Nothing now remaining to obstruct the return of *Al Ma-*
returns to *mun* to his capital, he entered *Bagdad* in the 204th year of
Bagdad. the Hejra, at the head of his loyal *Irakians*; who were all of them dressed in green. But *Al Mamun*, perceiving, that the affectation of this colour, gave some umbrage to the friends of his family, he very wisely revoked his order on that head, and permitted all his subjects, who pleased, to dress in black. The year of *Mamun's* return to *Bagdad*, is remarkable for the death of *Al Shafei*, one of the most celebrated of all the Moslem doctors. It is incredible with what encomiums, he is mentioned by those of his own sect, who say, that he was, as the sun of the world, and as health to the body. He is noted particularly, for his excellency in the study of the civil, and canon law, of the *Mahometans*, and for a great many works he composed, as well as for a college, founded and dedicated to his disciples, by the great *Salah Addiri*, besides other works of the same nature, erected by other princes, and for the same purposes; his disciples are still very numerous in *Arabia*.

Death of
Al Shafei,

Al Mamun being restored to the possession of *Bagdad* and the califat, made use of the tranquillity he enjoyed, in improving his favourite studies, and importing into his dominions, the most valuable treasures of *Greek*, and *European*, learning. He expended great part of his vast revenues in purchasing the most valuable treatises on all subjects, and his love of literature was such, that men of all religions, *Christians*, as well as others, were invited to his court, and there met with protection and encouragement. In short, he was a universal patron to every man of genius, and they rewarded him, by dedicating their works to his name and service. He carried astronomy to a much higher pitch, upon true principles, than ever was before known, amongst the *Moslems*, and the same may be said of philosophy, and all the other branches, in which he himself was a great proficient, at the same time, he applied himself generously to reward those who had been most instrumental in the re-establishment of his power. Amongst the first of those, was his great general *Taher*, upon whom and his descendants, he bestowed the government of *Korasan*, with almost a sovereign authority. *Taher* did not long enjoy this great dignity, for he died next year, which was the 207th of the *Hejra*. He is said to have been the greatest general in all the East, of his time, at the same time, to have been liberal, and magnanimous. One instance of his liberality, if true, approaches to phrensy; for we are told, that he was so touched, by a poem presented him, commemorating his glorious exploits, that he ordered a present of three hundred thousand dinars, to be given to the poet; adding, that had his poem been longer, the reward would have been larger. This story would seem incredible, were it not, that no instances of that kind can be so, in the greatest people then upon the earth; and, in a general whose riches were such as exceeded those of any sovereign prince in the world, his own master excepted. It is true, we read of no such instance of liberality in *Al Rashid*, or *Al Mamun*, to one man upon such an occasion. But then we are to consider, that their munificence run through a thousand different channels, and extended to the whole circle of learning and the arts; whereas that of *Taher*, was confined to this single instance.

Instance of
liberality.

For some years after this, we meet with no events in the Moslem history of the East, that require to be mentioned here, excepting the removal of governors of provinces, which, as has been already observed, when they were not attended with any remarkable circumstances, are immaterial to a modern, and an *English* reader. From them however, we learn, that notwithstanding all the precaution of the califfs, by those frequent removals, the powers of those governors, grew to be very formidable to their masters. The
government,

Removals

government, upon the decease of a governor, being commonly filled up by the soldiery; at least, till a new nomination came from the califf; and, even then, it was often difficult to dispossess the possessor.

Ibrahim

discovered
and par-
doned,

The first event of note we meet with, is the discovery of *Ibrahim* the son of *Al Mohdi*, who had been so long the rival of *Al Mamun*, in the califat, which happened in the 210th year of the Hejra. He had, as has been before observed, lurked ever since the time of his deposition, in *Bagdad*, with two of his wives, and he was now taken disguised in a woman's dress, endeavouring to make his escape out of *Bagdad*. By all that appears from the Moslem historians, and writers, there was then an excellent police in that city, and guards were placed in every street and avenue of it, for the prevention of all irregularities. *Ibrahim*, endeavouring to pass one of those guards, and giving but a very imperfect account of himself, he was carried to the commanding officer, who, upon removing his veil, soon discovered him to be a man, and who he was; and sent him prisoner to the califf. *Al Mamun*, contrary to the genius of his family, the mildest of whom, would not have hesitated a moment in putting *Ibrahim* to death, received him with complacency, admitting him to his table, and made him a present of ten thousand dinars, for his immediate supply. *Al Mamun* was equally generous to the descendants of *Ali*; for notwithstanding the invincible aversion, which not only the family of *Al Abbas*; but all the *Syrians* discovered upon his adopting the late *Ali*; his successor, he restored the posterity of the Prophet by *Ali*, to their family estate of *Fidak*, which had been left by the Prophet to *Fatima* his daughter. He likewise, as far as he could, abolish'd all the hardships and affronts, to which the house of *Ali* had been made subject to those of *Omyah* and *Al Abbas*, and ordered that the name of *Moayah*, should not be mentioned by his subjects with any distinction of respect, as if he had a superiority over the Prophet's other companions.

As are the
descend-
ants of
Ali.

Splendor
of the Mo-
slems in
Spain.

While one califf was reigning so gloriously in the East, another was extending with equal glory, the Moslem empire in the West. *Al Haken* still remained master of *Spain*, or the far greater part of it; and both the splendor and politeness of his court, far exceeded that of *Charles* the great, and his descendants. He reduced by his general *Abdalkarim*, the province of *Calaborra*, which had taken arms against him. It does not appear, that those commotions were raised by the Christian part of the inhabitants, for in point of religion, they and the *Moslems* agreed very well; but the *Moslems*, according to cotemporary authorities, by their intercourse with *Afric*, were now become a very powerful people, and by far the greatest maritime power in Europe. The great lords and emirs, under *Al Haken*, lived like

like sovereign princes, in vast luxury and splendor, and carried not only their arms, but their arts, their manners, and manufactures, almost all over *Europe*. That which we absurdly call the Gothic arch in building, was introduced by them; and there is scarcely now a polite country upon the continent of *Europe*, whose inhabitants do not retain some of their manners, habits; and customs. The practice of duelling, which, as appears in the course of this history, was so common amongst the *Arabs*, was evidently introduced into *Europe*, by the western *Moslems*, as was the famous practice of tilts, and tournaments, afterwards so common in *Europe*, and even in *Britain*, the only country in *Europe*, which was worth the conquering, in which they made no conquest.

Al Hakem could not have maintained his superiority over Their native emirs, and generals, who made those foreign conquests, val force. and who yearly returned to *Spain*, with their little squadrons loaded with the spoil of the coasts of *Italy*, *Sicily*, *France*, and other countries, had he not received perpetual supplies from *Africa*, and been well served by his own generals. The *Cordubans* taking arms, *Abdalkarim* broke into their city, and having put some of the ringleaders of the revolt, to the sword, he hanged above three hundred of the other rebels. Soon after this, that is in the year of the Hejra 206th, *Al Haken* died, after a long and glorious reign, and in an advanced age. He was the father of nineteen sons, and twenty-one daughters, and his eldest son *Abdalrahman*, was forty-one years of age, when he succeeded him. This Their ci-
Abdalrahman proved likewise to be a great prince. At the v.l wars. latter end of his father's reign, the dissensions which prevailed amongst the eastern *Moslems*, had encouraged the Christians, by which we can only mean those, of *Leon*, and *Asturias*, to invade them, and they even took *Barcelona*. While *Abdalrahman* was preparing to retake that city, he was obliged to turn his arms against one of his uncles, *Abdallah*, who rebelled against him: but *Abdallah* was defeated, and lost his life, and *Abdalrahman* made a noble use of the victory, by treating his wives and his children with great marks of humanity, and tenderness. There is strong reason for believing, that this rebellion, was occasioned by a vast prepossession in favour of the collateral right of succession, which the *Moslems* entertained, and which *Abdalrahman* endeavoured to remove. For he excluded all brothers and sisters, from succeeding to the fortunes or the effects, of any person, who left children. By this time, the Christians, in their turn, fell into civil dissensions. *Alphonso* the chaste, was, from his wickedness, and cruelty, driven from his throne, of which his son took possession, and his little kingdom was filled with bloodshed and civil dissensions. *Abdalrahman* improved this state of disorder amongst

amongst the Christians, so well, that his general *Abdaikarim*, drove them out of *Barcelona*, and all the other places they had taken from the *Moslems*. After this, he joined with *Ibrahim*, the son of *Aglad*, one of *Al Rashid*'s governors in *Africa*, in making a descent upon *Sicily*, which, in fact, they ravaged, and conquered, as they likewise did the island of *Crete*, where they defeated the imperial forces, and built the city of *Candia*.

Their dependence on the eastern califf. We have thought proper, for various reasons, to insert the history of the western *Moslems*, in that of the eastern. For though, the Omniyan califfs in *Spain*, acted by an authority independent of the eastern califfs, yet both their subjects in *Spain*, and their allies in *Africa*, still considered themselves, as being remotely dependent on the eastern califat, the mother of their own empire; and neither the *African Moslems*, nor their governors, had yet formally renounced their allegiance to the califf, though it must be owned, that they acted as if they had been independent on them, and the same *Ibrahim* here mentioned, laid the foundations of a large empire in *Africa*, which continued in his family for one hundred and twelve years. The reader is farther to observe, that though the *Moslems* in *Spain*, soon lost the name of *Arabs*, in that of *Saracens*, yet the name is in reality the same, the *Saracens*, being only a term of greater contempt, as signifying a people, coming from the *sara*, or the desert, alluding to the deserts of *Arabia*, and the neighbouring countries. The name of *Saracens* was afterwards lost in that of *Moors*, by which the Moslem inhabitants of *Spain*, are now best known; but that was owing to the vast number of *Africans* with which *Spain*, about this time, was peopled, all of them, properly speaking, subjects of the eastern califat.

Religion of *Al Mamun*.

Al Mamun, with all his learning, is said not to have been exempted from many weaknesses in point of religion, but we ought to be cautious, how we condemn him on that head, when we consider how nearly civil dissension is connected with religious disputes. The creation of the koran was part of the califf's faith, and ridiculous as the dispute about it appears, and really is, he published an edict, by which he condemned to corporal, and even to capital punishments, all who durst presume to be of a different opinion. Before his death, he ordered his judges, and masters of traditions, to enforce the same doctrine, tho' it was strongly opposed by the greatest Moslem doctors, who asserted, that the koran came from heaven, and is uncreated. This last is the opinion of the *Sunnites*, and it is said to have been confirmed, by *Mahomet* himself, who pronounced, every man to be an infidel, who believed otherwise. Thus *Al Mamun*, for following the dictates of common-sense, was termed a *Motazalite*, or a follower of the

the doctrine of *Al Mozaar*, whose heresy it was to believe, that the koran had nothing in it that was supernatural in its style, or composition; and that had the *Arabs* been left to themselves, by the Prophet, they could have produced a work equal, nay, superior to it in both those respects; nay, one of those Heretics went so far, as to say, that the koran resembled a body that might, sometimes, be turned into a man, and sometimes into a beast, an idea, which any man of judgment, who reads it, must agree to.

Though *Al Mamun*, in fact governed by himself, yet he His Mi- did not think fit to lay aside the office of Prime Minister. It nisters. is true, he had none for some time after *Fadl's* death, till he raised *Fadl's* brother *Hajan*, to that post, and he was succeeded by three others; but we can easily conceive, that their power was but nominal, by their not being mentioned in history, for any remarkable action. In fact, *Al Mamun* was too wise to throw a dangerous share of power into the hands of any subject, and he continued his family maxim, of making frequent removals, in the government of *Egypt*. *Abdallah*, the son of the great *Taber*, was appointed to that important post, at a time, when by the clemency of *Al Mamun*, the monasteries, and religious places, which had been taken from the Christians in *Egypt* and *Palestine*, were restored to them. The patriarch *James*, who, at that period, He fa- presided over the See of *Alexandria*, was a man of so great vours the piety and merit, that he is even said to have wrought mi- Christians racles, particularly upon the son of one *Makara*, an *Egyptian* nobleman, who in gratitude, erected and endowed a church at *Jerusalem*. A great plague of Locusts happening at that time to fall upon the holy city, and its neighbourhood, destroyed the fruits of the ground in such a manner, that the Moslem inhabitants were forced to abandon it, and to take refuge, in other parts of the califf's dominions; while many of the Christians fled to those of the *Greek* empire. The patriarch *Thomas*, laid hold of this opportunity, and being assisted by one *Bocam*, a rich *Egyptian* Christian, he imported, from the island of *Cyprus*, a noble store of cedars and firs, with which he repaired the roof of the church of the *Resurrection*, at *Jerusalem*. But this had almost proved fatal to Their en- *Thomas*, and the other Christians there. For, about the croach- 213th year of the Hejra, *Abdallah*, being recalled to *Bagdad*, ments. from the government of *Egypt*, touched at *Jerusalem* in his way; and the Christians there were accused, of having greatly enlarged the roof, and consequently the church of the *Resurrection*. This was a heinous offence, and contrary to the original capitulations, between the Moslems and the Christians, which the califf had always valued themselves upon religiously preserving, and indeed, if true, it was an act in the patriarch, of very indiscreet zeal. *Abdallah*, immediately ordered *Thomas* and the chief Christians in the place, into custody, declaring, if he found that the charge

against him could be supported, he would order them all to be publicly whipt; a punishment, which, however ignominious it is in itself, was often inflicted on the greatest Moslems. The patriarch however, knew so well how to dispose of one thousand dinars, in the hands of an antient Moslem, (to whose family he promised, as long as any of them remained, the same allowance out of the church stores, that priests, and deacons had), that he and his friends escaped the punishment, for the Moslem interceded so effectually in their favour, that they were not only pardoned by *Abdallah*, but the chief Moslems, who remained in *Jerusalem*, and who, it seems, were not of the number of their accusers, approved of what had been done. From the whole complexion of this story, however, it appears pretty plainly, that the zealous patriarch was conscious, that what he had done was not quite regular, unless we can suppose, what is not very probable, that *Abdallah* proceeded against him in an arbitrary manner.

They procure their pardon.

Account of learned men;

It would be depriving the memory of this great califf, of its brightest glory, should we neglect to mention a few of the great men of learning, who adorned his court, and whose works to this day, when they can be recovered, and translated, are in the highest estimation. *Habash*, an inhabitant of *Bagdad*, composed astronomical tables, and the famous *Alfragamus*, whose Arab name was *Al Forgan*, likewise composed the Elements of Astronomy, which have been since translated, and notes added to them by the learned *Golius*. *Abdallah* the son of *Sabel*, a man of great quality, and a favourite of the califf, was another eminent astronomer of this reign. *Mahomet* the son of *Musa*, was the author of other astronomical tables, that were in great repute, and a Jew, called *Mashallah*, was, for his learning, termed the Phoenix of the age. *Yahya*, one of the califf's freedmen, was a physician by profession, but though he was not very eminent in that art, he was very useful in translating, into the *Arabic* tongue, a great number of treatises, which the califf bought from the *Greeks*. Another *Yahya*, with one called *Sabel* the son of *Sabur*, were likewise eminent in the profession of physic, not to mention *George* the son of *Baktishua*, so often mentioned; *Isa*, the son of *Albakem*, and *Zakariah*, who were both of them eminent practitioners, in that art. But *Al Mamun*'s chief physician for some time, was one *Gabriel*, who had a yearly pension from him of about twelve thousand pounds sterling, and was admitted to him preferable to all others. *Gabriel* however, through some of those indiscretions, that are not uncommon to learned men, especially when they become favourites of a great prince, forfeited the califf's esteem so far, that he was ordered not to appear in his presence, and his pension was reduced, to about one hundred and sixty pounds a year. As to the califf himself, he pursued his studies with as much

and physicians.

much ardour, as if they had been the means of his living, and treated men of learning upon the same footing as he did the men of the first birth and quality about his court; that being, as he thought, the only way by which he could recommend the pursuits of literature to his own subjects. The great misfortune of his reign, and indeed, that of the public was, that the califat was dissolved, before the art of printing was discovered; and that these works, which, by his encouragement were brought to light, were wrote in Their language not universally known. Many of them however, are lodged in the king of France's, the Vatican, the Bodleian, and other great libraries of Europe, and others of them are daily coming to light. works.

But the glory of this great emperor has been obscured, by that which ought to have encreased it. His lenity towards the Christians, who enjoyed an uninterrupted repose throughout all his reign, and who were enriched by his munificence, for the treasures of learning with which they enriched his court, has drawn upon him the resentment of bigots of his own persuasion; who have accused him, as we have already seen, of being a Motazlite, that is of endeavouring to banish nonsense, superstition, bigotry, and cruelty, out of the religion he professed. They are likewise very severe upon his memory; for the service he did to the Moslem religion, by his endeavours to introduce amongst his subjects, the study of true philosophy, and of the speculative sciences, upon rational principles, which bigots will ever combat, having no enemy so formidable to them as the truth. But to return to the transactions civil and military of this great califf's reign.

When *Abdallah* the son of *Taber*, returned from his government of *Egypt*, he took possession of his own government of *Korasan*, and he was succeeded in that of *Egypt*, by *Motafem* the califf's brother; while *Al Abbas*, the califf's son, was by him appointed to the government of *Mesopotamia*. Before those two princes set out for their governments the califf made a present to each of them, of a very large sum of money; and in order to quiet as much as he could all intestine heart-burnings, amongst his subjects, he received about the same time, one *Abu Doliff*, who had been a great favourite with his brother *Al Amin*, into his protection and service. The internal quiet of his empire being thus established, he made preparations for invading the *Greek* dominions; but we are not instructed as to the grounds of the quarrel. The growing degeneracy of the *Greek* empire, and the profligate manner of its heads, leave little room to doubt that it was very justifiable on the part of the califf, who, we are told, took a fortress called *Karra*, and several other places of importance, and then repaired to *Damascus*. After this, the *Greek* emperor put to death

Their
works.

Magnifi-
cence of
Al Mamun,

Removals
of govern-
ment.

Al Mamun
invades
Greece.

His suc-
cesses.

about one thousand six hundred of the inhabitants of *Tarsus*, and *Al Masisyah*, who were either subjects to, or under the protection of the califf; who thought himself obliged to make reprisals. He therefore fell again into the *Greek* territories, and after making himself master of an important fortress, the name of which is not mentioned by Moslem authors, he sent his brother, *Al Motasem*, to enlarge his conquests, and he is said to have taken no fewer than thirty forts, belonging to the Christians. Another general under *Al Mamun*, named *Yahya*, at the same time took *Tawaba* by storm, and having burnt the greatest part of it, he returned to *Damascus*, the rendezvous of the califf's troops, during those expeditions. All those operations happened during the 216th year of the Hejra, which was farther distinguished, by the death of the celebrated *Zobeide*, the favourite wife and widow, of the great *Al Rasheed*. We know nothing of the history of this lady, since the reign of her son *Al Amin*, and therefore it is to be presumed, that during the present reign she had always lived in an honourable privacy.

A Rebel-
lion in E-
gypt.

Notwithstanding all the precautions, taken by the califfs of the house of *Al Abbas*, to keep the province of *Egypt* in subjection, yet a fresh rebellion broke out there, under the government of *Abdallah* the son of *Taber*, already mentioned. This rebellion was headed by one *Affari*, the son of *Hakem*, and his son, who took upon themselves the government of that province. They were however, defeated, by *Abdallah*, the son of *Taber*, who stripped them of all the wealth they had amassed, to support the rebellion, and sent it to *Bagdad*. But no sooner was this rebellion suppressed, than another broke out, under the *Al Bimaidæ*, who were the posterity of forty Christians, of great rank, at the time when *Egypt* was reduced by the *Moslems*. Those Christians, had settled themselves at *Taima*, where they might have remained in quiet, had they not trusted to the distractions of the califat, and refused to pay the usual tribute imposed upon the Christians. As the califf's brother *Al Motasem* had been lately appointed governor of *Egypt*, and had returned to *Bagdad*, where he served in his brother's armies, there is the strongest reason for believing, that the *Bimaidæ* were strong enough to oblige him to retire out of that country, and that they made a very formidable progress in the rebellion. For the califf, in the 217th of the Hejra, was obliged in person, with his brother *Al Botasem*, to undertake an expedition against *Taima*, a city of *Egypt*, still well known by the same name, which he soon reduced, without much bloodshed, and thereby put an end to the rebellion. As *Al Mamun*'s government had always been very mild, particularly with regard to the Christians, it is no wonder, if some severities were inflicted at this time

Taima-
taken.

upon them, for many of them were put to the sword, and their women and children were carried in captivity to *Bagdad*. Upon the suppression of this rebellion, the califf entered *Mesr* in triumph, and left in *Egypt* many magnificent, and some useful, evidences of his power and public spirit. He even granted the favour to two Christians, who were gentlemen of his bedchamber, to build a church, which went after their name.

This Egyptian expedition being ended, *Al Mamun* broke into the imperial territories, and laid siege to *Lulua*; but being obliged to return to *Bagdad*, the general to whom he left the conduct of the siege, was surprized and beaten by the garrison. This, and the approach of the *Greek* emperor, with an army to raise the siege, brought the califf again into the field, which made the *Greeks* retire. Their cowardice disgusted the garrison so greatly, that they opened their gates to the califf's troops, and were received as his subjects. Upon this, the *Greek* emperor sent the califf some propositions for a peace, but they were rejected, and the califf made many other great conquests over the *Greeks*, besides subduing all the rebels of his dominions. The principal of the latter was one *Babec*, who seems to have been an impostor of no mean parts. By the number of profelytes he gained in *Persia* he defeated in several battles the califf's generals, and killed one of them, *Ebu Hamed*, with his own hand, and falling down into the plain country, he made himself master of the two important cities of *Al Iebal*, and *Hamadan*; and by the force of impudence, and pretending to be a prophet, and the founder of a new religion, he grew too formidable a rebel, to be longer neglected; so that *Al Mamun*, was obliged to break off the course of his conquests in *Caramania*, to turn his arms against *Babec*. Being arrived, in his return to *Bagdad*, near the source of the river *Badandun*, one of the most delightful in the world, for the purity of its waters, and the beauty of its banks, and having bathed himself with his brother *Motasem*, in that river, he could not help wishing for a few fresh dates of *Axad*, to compleat the pleasure he had received from his refreshment in the water, and the beautiful prospect which its streams and the landships around it afforded him. In expressing himself in this manner, he was told, that some mules were arrived in the camp, laden with these delicious dates. They came too opportunely for the califf to resist the temptation. He indulged himself in the sober luxury of eating fresh dates, and drinking the pure waters of *Badandun*; but to such an excess, as threw him into a fever; and he was carried to a place called *Rakka*. The Moslem historians, both *Arab* and *Persian*, are excessively superstitious, and they have given us a circumstance, that ill agrees with the character of *Al Mamun*. For they tell us, that the astrologers foretold he should die, at a place called *Rakka*, and

Death of
Al Ma-
mun.

that the moment he heard, that that was the name of the village to which he was carried, when he was seized with his illness, he looked upon himself as being a dead man. The symptoms proving mortal, a busy physician, one *Masawaih*, with another courtier, came and desired him to make some declaration before his death, of the faith he died in.

Hej. 218. *Al Mamun* was now in his last agonies, but he expired with July 18th. an expression in his mouth, that would have befitted that of a Christian philosopher, "O thou, said he, who never diest, pity me now dying," and then he gave up the ghost. His dead body was immediately carried to *Tarsus*, and by his son *Al Abbas*, and his successor *Al Motasem*, it was buried in the house of one of his father's eunuchs.

His character.

The glory of bringing the subjects of the califat into the paths of learning and politeness, undoubtedly was due to the great *Al Rashid*, though as we have seen, several princes, of both houses of *Omnyahs* and *Al Abbas*, had the same noble dispositions, but without the same opportunities, and power of carrying them into execution. But notwithstanding this glory so justly due to *Al Rashid*, because he was the first, who had the spirit and courage to substitute politeness and learning, in the place of enthusiasm and nonsense, his son *Al Mamun*, was certainly his superior in all other respects; being a more humane, as well as a learned prince; and so prudent that it is hard to say in what religion he died. It is certain, he was an enemy to enthusiasm, and superstition, and a friend to truth, for real knowledge is truth; and that was the end of all his studies, and all his pursuits, when we consider him as a man. In times of peace, it was to that end he directed all the immense power, and riches he possessed, for he seems never to have enjoyed them, but when they were employed for the benefit of science, and the arts: but on this head, we have been already pretty full. What

Learning of the Moslems.

is to be added here is; that it is to be lamented, the genius of the *Moslems*, their pride, and their greatness inspired them with a contempt for all languages but their own. Hence it was, that classical learning, seems to have been little cultivated amongst them; and their califfs, instead of prevailing upon them to study the learned languages, were obliged to be at immense pains and expence in procuring the chief works written in those languages, to be translated into the languages of their own dominions, chiefly into *Arabic* and the *Persic*. From this, the reader may easily conceive that there was no such thing, as critical learning amongst the *Moslems*, for all attempts of that kind, were made by christians chiefly, and sometimes by Jews. Neither had the

Their poetry.

Moslems the least idea of the philosophy of the ancient Greeks, and indeed by what appears from their writings, they had but imperfect notions of their history. Some fragments, that have been translated, of their poetry, are natural, and delicate, and the thoughts would do honour to any language.

language. Their manner of writing history is strong, and all the chief passages, and characters of it, are well mark'd; some of them beyond any thing we have from *Greece* or *Rome*; for none can read their descriptions of *Kaled*, and the first califfs, without imagining them present to the eye, hearing their words, and seeing their persons. We are not however to imagine, that *Al Rashid* and his son *Al Mamun*, did not endeavour to introduce amongst their subjects, all the literature that *Greece* and *Rome* could boast of; but their genius did not invite them to many pursuits of that kind. Thinking, and perhaps with truth, that no people were ever so great as themselves, they cultivated an acquaintance with no people but themselves. The califfs therefore wisely encouraged the bent of their genius, which led them to the studies of medicine, chymistry, astronomy, and consequently of the mathematics. Some of their most eminent doctors however, in the days of *Al Rashid*, and *Al Mamun*, had studied both *Aristotle* and *Plato*; and the controversy about the creation of the koran was managed upon Platonic principles; for it was admitted by the sect which *Al Mamun* patronized, that the truths of the koran might be so far said to be uncreated, as that the ideas of them existed through all eternity in the mind of God; which, if it contains truth, is indisputable. In short, *Al Mamun*, at the same time he patronized the doctrine of the koran's creation, patronized the reasonable part of his subjects, who rejected all the nonsensical dreams of their Prophet and the whole system of his judgements, of rewards and punishments, in an after life. It is true, according to the Moslem authorities, he seems to have gone too far in endeavouring to force his subjects into his own opinions, by decapitations, torturings, and whippings. Perhaps if he had taken milder measures, he might have succeeded better. But, as has been already hinted, it is hard to pronounce any thing on that head, as those he had to deal with were the wildest, and most intractable of enthusiasts.

Talents in history.

Their theology.

Al Mamun, was not quite fifty years of age when he died; and he reigned about twenty years and a half, sole califf. His countenance was comely, and his stature middling. But his beard, at the time of his death was perfectly grey. In his private character, he loved the company of his friends, but he was so tractable, that he left all engagements for the improvement of his mind. The Grammarian who instructed him was a *Persian* slave, and his name was *Kossa*; but a man of vast wit and politeness. In short, *Al Mamun*, by the universal suffrage of the Moslem authors, even those least favourable to his memory, was the greatest prince the house of *Al Abbas* ever produced, and the house of *Al Abbas*, according to them, produced the greatest men the world ever saw.

The califf's great qualifications.

Al Motasem, fourth son of Al Rashid the great, the eighth califf of the house of Al Abbas.

He is succeeded by *Al Motasem*.

His severity to the *Sonnites*.

Tranquillity restored.

Babec subdued.

Al Motasem succeeded to the califat, in prejudice, not only to an elder brother living, but to the son of the late califf. His mother *Maredab* was a concubine to *Al Rashid*, and therefore far inferior to the famous *Zobeide*, who was always considered as the empress of the faithful. *Al Motasem* seems to have inherited all the spirit and principles of his brother. He was an enemy, and what is worse, a persecutor of the *Sonnites*, who assert, that the koran existed equally with God from all eternity. The late califf had the suppression of this enthusiasm so much at heart, that about the time of his death, two famous professors of that doctrine, called *Abmed*, and *Mohammed*, were sent to him in chains, but he died before their arrival. The new califf however, ordered *Abmed*, surnamed *Hanbal*, who was the founder of the fourth sect of the *Sonnites*, to be most cruelly whipt, than which, perhaps, he could not have done a more material service to the nonsense that this doctrine espoused. Others of the *Sonnite* sect, escaped the lash, by certain metaphysical distinctions, in which, the *Moslems* of all persuasions were very expert.

Al Motasem, notwithstanding *Al Abbas* recognized his sovereignty as califf, was however upon his guard so far as to order the fortrefs of *Tawaba* to be demolished; and this seems to have quieted some commotions in favour of *Al Abbas*, which were arising among the troops left at *Tarsus*. *Al Motasem*, at the same time ordered all the military stores and arms, that had been amassed there by *Al Abbas*, to be carried from thence, and the former inhabitants of the town, which had been planted by others, to resume their old habitations. Every thing in those parts being thus settled in tranquillity, the new califf went to *Bagdad*, where he was solemnly inaugurated, without any opposition.

He then turned his thoughts towards the suppression of the formidable rebellion, under *Babec*, who by this time, had in a manner subdued or over-run, the *Persian Irak*, and even made himself master of *Ispahan*, as well as *Hammaden*, with all the strong places of the califf in those countries, some of which he dismantled, and some he preserved; as best suited his own purposes. To what we have already mentioned of this monstrous rebel, we are to add, that he was by birth a Christian, and got his name *Babec* by being the author of a merry religion; but all that we know of it is, that it was set up in direct contradiction to all other religions, then in the world, or at least in *Asia*; and that the founder of it was a disgrace to human nature, for his cruelty, which exceeds almost

almost all belief. Notwithstanding this, he had a most incredible number of followers; and having taken upon himself the title of king of *Persia*, he threatened the destruction of the califat itself, at the time of *Al Motasem's* accession to that throne. It has been already mentioned, that the *Turks* were now not only making a great figure in *Asia*, but that they were so extremely numerous, that many of them entered into the service of the califfs, and proved to be excellent troops. One of them, *Afshin*, who had in his own country been employ'd in disciplining the *Kakan's* guards, was considered by the califf, as the most proper officer in his dominions, for reducing *Babec*; having probably been bred up about the *Irakian* mountains. Being put at the head of an army, his first care was to rebuild a chain of forts, which had been erected between *Arzanjan*, and *Ardebil* in the province of *Adherbijan*, which had been demolished by *Babec*, to facilitate his incursions into the califf's dominions. He then advanced against *Babec* whom he forc'd to a battle, and defeated with the loss of sixty thousand rebels. After this great overthrow, *Ispahan* and *Hamaden*, were retaken, by *Afshin*, but notwithstanding the prodigious overthrow that *Babec* had received, he found means to repair his loss, so that he was soon in the field, at the head of a greater army than ever, and *Afshin* could do no more during that campaign, than reduce some of his forts. This inability, perhaps, was in a great measure occasion'd by a new rebellion of the house of *Ali*, breaking out in the province of *Korajan*, under *Mahomet* the son of *Al Kasan*, one of the numerous descendants of that family. His progress at first was very rapid but being unable to resist the califf's arms, he was defeated, and sent prisoner to *Bagdad*; from whence in a short time after, he is said to have escap'd, and never more to have been heard of but that is extremely improbable. This rebellion being extinguish'd in the 219th year of the *Hejra*, *Afshin* was unable to prosecute his expedition against *Babec*. His great care was to render the passes in the mountains inaccessible to the rebel troops, by refortifying them, and leaving strong detachments to defend them. He then marched into the plain country, and at a village called *Arsu*, a decisive battle was fought, in which the rebels are said to have lost no fewer than one hundred thousand men, so inexhaustible were their numbers. As to *Babec* himself he retir'd with his broken army, first to *Mogan*, and from thence towards his native country *Casabad*; where the strongest of all his fortresses lay. *Afshin* found prodigious difficulties in pursuing the rebel; he had lodged large bodies of troops in the defiles of the *Corduean* mountains, so that *Afshin* was obliged to fight every inch of ground he gained upon him, and by that means, the rebellion continued for another campaign. *Afshin*, in the mean while lost a vast number of men, and his army was reduc'd to the utmost difficulties, by the rebels cutting

His remarkable fate.

Hej. 219.
A.D. 834.

cutting off his provisions and convoys; and stopping up all the avenues, from whence he could draw supplies. *Afshin* however proceeded with such perseverance, that, by degrees, he reduced all his lesser fortresses; and in the 222d year of the *Hajra* he obliged the rebel to shut himself up in *Casba'ad*, and death, which we are now to consider as the capital of his dominions. For some time he defended himself with prodigious vigour and courage, but, in a few months, he abandoned the place in disguise, and fled, attended by his son *Abdallah*, and *Moauriah* his General, into *Armenia*. It would appear that in his flight he was followed by all his family. *Afshin* soon made himself master of *Casbabad*, and amongst other prisoners, he took *Nud*, one of ten executioners, who had been constantly employd by *Babec* in his cruelties. *Nud* himself acknowledged, that with his own hands he put to death, above twenty thousand *Moslems*, and that his companions had destroyed as many. *Babec* having reached *Armenia* might there have raised a new rebellion, had he not been betrayed by an officer of that country called *Sabel* the son of *Sanbat*. This person knowing *Babec*, made him a profer of his sword and services; and acted his part so well that he decoyed the rebel into his power. *Babec* still affected to retain all the pomp and distinctions of a monarch; but *Sabel* having made sure of his person, came one day abruptly in, and clapt himself down by him, while he was at dinner. *Babec*, expressing strong signs of indignation and surprize, asked *Sabel* how he came to be so presumptuous, as to be seated unasked in his presence and at his table. *Sabel* still affected to treat him with the usual distinctions, "Great king, said he, I acknowledge my fault; for who am I, that I should presume to sit in the presence of so mighty a monarch." He then sent for a smith, and continuing his discourse, "mighty monarch said he stretch forth thy legs, that this man may iron thee." It was in vain for *Babec* to remonstrate against this usage, or even to offer a large sum of money for his liberty. *Sabel*, not only put him in irons, but inhumanly ordered his mother, sister, and wife to be ravish'd in his presence, by way of retaliation, for his having treated all the women prisoners he took, in that manner. When *Afshin* was carried before the califf, who was then at *Sammarra* in *Irak* about 30 miles to the westward of *Bagdad*, he ordered the rebel to suffer the same death he had inflicted upon others; for his belly was after 20 years rebellion. ript up, his hands, feet, and head cut off, and his body fixt upon a gibbet. Thus ended a most inhuman rebellion which had lasted for about 20 years, and several other rebellions at the same time were likewise suppressed; particularly that of the *Zathaldians*, who inhabited the low grounds between *Bosra* and *Waset*. It appears from many circumstances, that the prodigious extent of the califf's dominions, prevented him and his governors from attending equally to all parts of them; and many petty rebels and usurpers, held a kind

kind of independant dominions in remote places. Sometimes they acknowledged the power of the califf, and then the governors wink'd at the power they assum'd in their neighbourhood. Sometimes they formed a party under hand, without declaring themselves till they took the field; and sometimes the califf's governors neglected to suppress them, as thinking them too despicable. Some of those rebels, Other rebellions, founded their claim on a kind of patriarchal right, as being descended from the head, parent, or king of a particular tribe, or country; but the greatest number pretended to the gifts of prophecy and inspiration: which were the never failing baits of rebellion in those countries. In fact, the *Irakians*, the *Korassans*, the *Persians*, the *Arabs*, and the other subjects of the califat in general, were not only the most inconstant people in the world; in their natural dispositions, but had very plausible pretexts for rebelling; so that it requir'd princes of no ordinary genius and capacity to keep them in subjection: and such they met with in those of the house of *Al Abbas*.

Theophilus, the son of *Michael Balbus*, was at this time War with emperor of *Constantinople*, and depending upon the civil the *Greeks* distractions of the califat, he invaded it with an army of one hundred thousand men, took the city of *Zabatra* the birth place of the califf, whose earnest entreaties could not prevent its destruction, and after killing the men, he carried the women and children into captivity; and proceeded with equal cruelty, thro' other parts of the *Moslem* dominions. At *Malatia* and *Capadocia*, he massacred the men, and carried off the women prisoners. In other places he mutilated the men in the most frightful manner, by cutting off their ears and noses. When *Zabatra* was taken, an Arab lady of the house of *Al Abbas*, being taken prisoner, by a *Greek*, she called out, help me, O *Al Motasem*! upon which the *Greek*, in a scoffing manner said, there *Motasem* comes upon his py'd horse. This incident being told to the califf, he magnanimously swore, that he could have no rest, until he delivered that very woman, and being impatient of such barbarity resolved to punish it effectually. He therefore raised an army which must have been immensely numerous, as it is said to have exceeded any that had been raised by any former califf, and its first operation was to retake *Zabatra* and to relieve the *Moslem* lady. According to the *Greek* authors, *Theophilus*, having with such unmanly cruelty, destroyed the birth place of the califf, the latter ordered *Amorum*, the birth place of the emperor, to be engraved upon the shields of his soldiers; as a memorial that he was determined to destroy that city. *Al Motasem* divided his army so as to carry on the war in many different places at the same time. He gave the command of the right column to *Afshin*; the left was commanded by *Albnas*, and the main body or centre by himself. His first attack was upon *Ancyra*, a city inhabited by

Story of a
Moslem
lady.

The ca-
liff's suc-
cesses.

He takes
Amorium.

by christians, and he summoned it to surrender, promising to save it, if the inhabitants would immediately open their gates to his army. This he did at the request of *Ayub* or *Joh*, the patriarch of *Antioch*, who being a particular favourite with the califf, accompanied him in this campaign. The inhabitants of *Ancyra* rejected the condition and the city was taken, and levelled with the ground. The califf then marched to *Tarsus*, and from thence into *Phrygia* pointing his march all along to *Amorium*, which the Greek emperor was extremely desirous of saving. *Theophilus* therefore advanced to *Dorylæum*, about three days journey from *Amorium*, and prepared to give battle to the Moslems, *Eius*, his head general, a man of vast knowledge and experience in war, and other of his generals endeavoured to dissuade him from this resolution, on account of the superior numbers and discipline of the califf's troops; but *Theophilus* obstinately persisting in his purpose, a battle ensued. The califf, by this time, had been rejoined by the right and left wings of his army, and he sent out ten thousand *Turks* who were in his service to skirmish with the Christians, and to harraß them, till he could collect his forces, and make the proper dispositions for an engagement. Some days were spent by the two armies in endeavouring to get the ground, and other advantages of each other, but at last, a general battle was fought at *Dezymenum*. At first the *Greeks* obtained the advantage, but their pursuit was interrupted, by the *Turkish* archers, who obliged them to retreat in their turn. This might have been followed by a total rout of the *Greek* troops and the death, or at least the captivity, of the emperor, had not a body of *Persians* in the *Greek* pay, thrown themselves round his person, and enabled him to make an orderly retreat. Upon the whole, it might have been looked upon as a drawn battle had not the califf opened to himself the way to besiege *Amorium* the great object of his revenge and ambition, with the loss of thirty thousand of his enemies, who were killed in the battle of *Dezymenum*.

The siege of *Amorium* however, proved a matter of greater difficulty, than the califf perhaps had foreseen, and lasted for fifty five days, but at last the place was betrayed by a Christian renegade, and *Motasem*, exasperated by the losses he had met with, and the cruelty of the Greek emperor, destroyed the city, after killing the males, and carrying the women and children into captivity. One reflection on this head may be proper, which is, that the best of the Moslems were no other than humane butchers; and that in fact they did not look upon their enemies, as being of the same species with themselves. *Al Motasem*, who in this war put in cold blood so many thousands to death, used to be celebrated for his clemency, and yet this clement califf could coolly cut the throats of thousands of his fellow creatures.

The

The siege of *Amorium* being finished, the califf returned home. He re- with thirty thousand prisoners, which was equal to the number turns of those he had put to sword, when that place was taken. home. In his march homewards, his troops, as often happens in the eastern countries, could find no water, and that distress gave the christian prisoners an opportunity of endeavouring to deliver themselves from captivity, by rebelling against his power, upon which the califf ordered six thousand of them to be put to the sword. The califf perhaps was sour'd, at this time, by the discovery he made of a conspiracy to raise his nephew *Al Abbas*, son of the late califf to the throne. Some of his Officers were engaged in this conspiracy, which Conspira- they proposed to effect, by putting to death the califf's two cy against generals, *Afshin*, and *Ashal*. But the plot being discovered, him. *Al Abbas* was thrown into prison, where by the califf's express Hej. 224. command, he perished thro' thirst. This conspiracy was followed by a rebellion, which one *Baraba* the son of *Karan*, raised in *Tabrestan*, but tho' the rebel was very strong, he was defeated, by *Abdallah*, the son of the great *Taber*, the hereditary Governor of *Korasan*; and taken prisoner; and being sent in chains to the califf, he ordered him to be whipt to death, which was accordingly executed. Those cruel executions did not put a stop to the conspiracies against the califf. Even his favourite general *Afshin*, the *Turk*, was engaged in a plot to dethrone him. It was discovered, that this great general was a real idolater; and that he actually had certain little idols in his house. This no doubt accelerated his fate, notwithstanding the prodigious services he had done to the califf. He was accused of corresponding with other traitors, and particularly of exciting *Maziair*, the governor of *Tabrestan* to rebel. Upon this by the califf's orders he was put to death, and his body exposed upon a gibbet, along with that of *Babec*, whom he had so gloriously subdu'd, in *Baraba*. *Affim* put to death.

Notwithstanding all those severities, and executions, *Al Motasem*, if we are to believe the *Moslem* historians, was a miracle of mercy, and undoubtedly he was one of the most amiable princes, that ever made profession of the faith of *Mahomet*. But *Motasem* was far from being a bigot; he adhered strictly to the maxims of his brother the late califf, and endeavoured to root out enthusiasm, by destroying the opinion of the eternal existence of the koran; which was so dear to all true *Moslems*. He likewise gave great scandal to his subjects, by being the professed patron, and friend, of the Christians. He protected all their priests, and their patriarchs, and suffered them even to send missionaries into *Africa*, to make converts. A Christian bishop, one *James*, had been banished by the queen of *Ethiopia*, during the absence of her husband in the wars, but he found shelter in the *Moslem* dominions; and upon the king's return the bishop was restored to his functions, with great honour. But the highest proof, which this Religion of the califf.

Death of
his physi-
cian.

The ca-
liff's death
and cha-
racter.

this califf gave, of his despising Mahometism, was his treatment of his physician *Salmawiyah*, who was a Christian. *Salmawiyah* being taken ill, was visited by the califf, who finding him past recovery, asked him with tears in his eyes, who was to succeed him, as his physician. That impertinent fool *Yahya*, answered, *Salmawiyah*, but take none of the fellows compound prescriptions. By this last expression it appears, as if *Salmawiyah*, had been no great friend to the chymical system of physic, which was beginning then to be greatly in vogue amongst the *Arabs*. When *Salmawiyah* died, the grief of *Al Motasem* was not only excessive, but extravagant. He declared that *Salmawiyah's* skill had been the preserver of his life, and that he was sure he could not long survive him. He ever fasted all the day of *Salmawiyah's* death, and ordered the funeral service to be performed in his own presence over the body after the christian ritual, with perfumes, and candles. *Yahya*, it seems did succeed *Salmawiyah*, to the post of physician to the califf, but not to his abilities and knowledge of his masters constitution; for by altering the regimen which had been observed by *Salmawiyah* the califf's health declined, and in a few months after, he died of a fever at *Samarra*, in the 49th year of his age, after a reign of eight years and eight months. At the time of his death, he is said to have been master of eight thousand slaves, eight thousand million of dinars, and eighty thousand dirhens, and having been born in the eighth month of the year, all those circumstances coincided, in procuring him from his subjects; the name of the Octave; or the eight.

His mag-
nificence,

Al Motasem in his person, like the other princes of the house of *Al Abbas*, was very handsome. His hair was red, his beard long, and his chest very full. His bodily strength was so great, that we are told he could raise, and carry about with him, a weight of one thousand pounds. With regard to his œconomy, what is recorded of it is absolutely incredible; for we are told, he had no fewer than an hundred and thirty thousand pyed horses in his stables at *Samarra*, the city which he had pitched upon to be the capital of his empire instead of *Bagdad*; with the inhabitants of which, he was greatly out of humour. We are farther told that resolving to raise a terras, on which he intended to build a castle that should command all *Samarra*, he ordered that every one of his horses, instead of a bag of oats, as was usual in that country, to have a bag of earth, tyed about his neck; and those bags when empty'd in the middle of the city formed the terras, on which he built his castle. Equally incredible things are told of the attendants upon his court in which he is said to have entertained fifty thousand boys. But, in fact, we can pronounce nothing to be incredible on account of its extravagance about a prince, who had power and wealth enough to gratify almost every wish he could conceive.

That

That *Al Motasem* was possessed of many noble virtues we must necessarily believe, from the preference that was given him by the late califf even over his own son; as well as by other circumstances, related of him by good authors. Having one day lost his attendants, he happened to come up with an old man, whose ass had sunk beneath her load of thorns, and the old man being unable to assist himself, the califf bent his shoulder to the ass, and raised him up; and afterwards made the old man a present of four thousand dinars. We are told likewise, that *Al Motasem* was the first califf who design'd himself so by the grace of God; and it is by no means improbable, that christian princes, from him adopted the same title: as their subjects did many other words and usages, then common to the *Moslems*.

We cannot take our leave of this reign without one general observation, which is, that the Christians of Europe during this period were mere barbarians, and that had it not been for the court of the califat, all learning and politeness, must have been extinguished in *Asia*, and in *Europe*. Charles the Great with all his power and conquests, was a bigot in his principles, barbarous in his manner and inhuman in his practices. His son and successors, were weak, and ignorant beyond all conception, and the whole Christian world, was at this time over run with the most despicable superstition and ignorance. The house of *Al Abbas* therefore supported the pillars of literature, and however uncouth the manners of the *Moslems* may seem to the present age, there certainly reigned among them, an openness, and magnanimity, and a species of politeness, that was peculiarly their own, and therefore inimitable. *Al Motasem* during his reign, governed by a first minister, who was his secretary of state, and certain *Turks* possessed some of the chief posts of his court and army.

General
observa-
tion.

Al Watheck Billah, the ninth califf of the house of Al Abbas.

THIS great prince, was the son of *Al Motasem*, and his mother was a *Greek*. The period in which he lived, was so critical, that it is to be lamented, the accounts of it that have come to our hands are so lame. We know however, that he was raised to the *Moslem* throne, in the year of the *Hejra* two hundred and twenty eight, which answers to our years of God eight hundred and thirty-three. Perhaps, this defective information is owing to the important scenes of action in which he was engaged; which prevented him from keeping about him, as his immediate predecessors had done, men of learning and of genius. He however, trod history.

Hej. 227:
A.D. 842.

Defects of
*Al Wa-
heck's*
history.

trod in their steps, in all other respects, and copied after the amiable *Al Mamun*, in his detestation of superstition, and bigotry; which he perhaps carried too far, because we are informed his persecution of the Sonnites was very violent. He was humane and beneficent to the descendants of the house of *Ali*, and in the beginning of his reign, one of his generals, *Raja*, the son of *Ayub*, or *Job* suppressed a rebellion of the *Kaisians*, at *Damascus*, and struck off the heads of fifteen hundred rebels there.

Though the history of this califf is so uncertain, that we cannot pronounce any thing decisive concerning it, yet it appears extreamly probable that he resumed the thoughts of asserting his right to the Moslem conquests in *Europe*. One author informs us that he fitted out a naval power, with which he made a descent upon *Sicily*, took *Messina*, and made a conquest of that island. Others attribute that conquest to the Moslems of *Africa*, who were commanded by the descendants of *Aglab*, whom we have already mentioned. Be this as it will, it is certain, that the *Normans*, who were then beginning to make a great figure in *Europe*, attempted to dispossess *Abdalrahman* the western califf of *Spain*; but they were repulsed both at *Cadiz* and *Seville*, and being driven by the Moslems to *Lisbon*, they were obliged to abandon the whole country.

Character
of *Al Wathek*.

As to *Al Wathek*, he possessed all the great and shining qualifications of the family of *Al Abbas*, was himself an excellent poet, passionately fond of science and literature, the patron of all men of knowledge, and what exceeds all his other praises, he was so charitable, that during his reign scarcely a beggar was to be found throughout all his vast dominions. He is said indeed, to have been a little credulous, and to have believed in astrology, so much that his horoscope was cast, and he was assured, though in fact he was within ten days of his death, that his reign should last fifty years. He endeavoured, like his two immediate predecessors, to root out from the minds of his subjects, the gross ideas of the eternity of the koran, and the corporal entertainments, which they were to have with God in the next life. But this was of no service to the tranquility of his reign. He was considered, as schismatic, and a doctor, one *Al Korai*, who was considered as an orthodox Moslem, and took upon himself the title of the preserver of prophetic traditions, entered into a conspiracy to dethrone him. The conspiracy, which was formed at *Bagdad*, being discovered by the governor of that city, *Al Korai* was seized in his own house, and sent prisoner to *Al Wathek*, who was then at *Sammarra*, which for some time had been the seat of the califat. *Al Wathek* looking upon enthusiasm to be the worst of treasons against his government, pressed the traitor to declare his opinion concerning the eternity of the koran, but without charging him with the conspiracy. The doctor,

tor, insisted upon the orthodoxy of that doctrine, and refusing obstinately to renounce it, the califf, with one blow of his scymeter, severed his head from his body. Perhaps his zeal against superstition reached too far, and led him into cruelty. *Mahomet*, his vizir or first minister, knowing how greatly he detested, the principles of the *Sonnites*, was excessively rigorous against them; and in fact *Al Wathek* discovered a much greater friendship for the Christians, than he did for the orthodox *Moslems*. In the two hundred and thirty-first year of the *Hejra*, he settled a cartel with the emperor of the *Greeks*, and redeemed four thousand four hundred and sixty men, and eight hundred women, besides one hundred of his allies, out of captivity. But a misunderstanding, soon after arising between him, and the *Greek* emperor, he invaded, but without success, the imperial territories; for we are told, that he was driven back with loss. He was in all other respects, an excellent prince; he proposed *Al Mamun* for the model of his government, and he imitated him in his severities against those who maintained the eternity of the *koran*. His death is said by some to have been occasioned by excessive venery, and making use of provocatives in his drink. Others say, that being troubled with the dropsy, he went into a bath, where he was suffocated, after a reign of near six years. He is reported to have something remarkably terrible about his eyes, and that, when his corpse was laid out, a Lizard crept from the garden to his bedchamber, and unperceived plucked them out and devoured them. His complexion was fair, his chest was very full, and he was of a middling stature. His chief failings were his belief in astrology, his immoderate love of women, and his persecuting those who differed from him in religious points. He was, at the time of his death, about thirty-two years of age.

His attachment to the Christians

Al Motawakkel the tenth califf of the house of Al Abbas.

THOUGH *Al Wathek* left a son, he was judged to be too young to succeed him; and the chief men of his court, which was held at *Samarra*, recognized his brother *Al Motawakkel* for califf, who was then about twenty-six years of age. His election was chiefly brought about by *Wasif*, the general of a body of *Turkish* mercenaries, consisting of about ten thousand, who had been taken into pay by *Al Motasem*, and served as a body guard to the califfs. This gave *Wasif* so decisive an influence in the choice of a califf, that the other chief officers, civil and military, were obliged to concur in his nomination. *Al Motawakkel* began

Succeeded by *Al Motawakkel*

Tyranny of the Turks.

gan his reign by removing the governor of *Egypt* from his post, which he conferred upon one of his own friends called *Anbah*. He then punished with the most cruel death, *Mahomet*, who had been vizir, or prime minister, in the late reign; and had been guilty of some indecencies towards him. This vizir is said to have been a worthless proud man, but he can scarcely be thought to have deserved the death he suffered, which was that of being shut up in a red hot stove, full of iron spikes.

The califf
favours
the house
of *Ali*.

Al Motawakkel was wise enough to perceive the distractions of the late califats, which chiefly arose, from the persecution of the *Sonnites*, and the unsettled state of the succession. To remedy the first of those evils, he stopt the persecution of the *Sonnites*, and declared himself a professed enemy of the house of *Ali*. He laid several penalties on such of his subjects as went in pilgrimages to *Ali's* tomb, and he not only razed to the ground the monument of *Hosein* *Al Ali's* son, but drew a piece of water over it, but the staunch *Shjits*, who held the name of *Ali* and his family in the utmost veneration, pretended the water was so respectful, that it would not approach the tomb of *Hosein*, but kept at an awful distance from it.

The suc-
cession set
tled.

Al Motawakkel had three sons. He declared the eldest called *Al Montaser*, to be his successor; he was to be succeeded by his second son *Al Motaz*, and upon his death, his third son, *Al Mowaiad*, was to succeed. He likewise assigned them all different governments. To *Al Montaser* he gave *Africa*, *Kinnisrin*, *Syria*, *Mesopotamia*, all *Arabia*, *India*, *Cusa*, with many other rich provinces. To *Al Motaz*, he gave *Korasan*, *Persia*, *Tabestran*, *Armenia*, and *Adherbijan*. And to *Al Moawaiad*, he gave *Damascus*, *Hems*, *Palestine*, and *Al Ordan*. The califf at the same time made each of his sons a present of two standards, one white, and the other black, which was to be carried before them; being the badges to distinguish them, as the heirs of the califat. From what has been said, with regard to this califf's sons, the reader may easily perceive, that his history is very confused; since, he must have reigned several years before they could be of age to undertake the governments he gave them. Neither is it easy to account for the manner in which they held those governments, as we find other governors appointed by the califf to the same provinces.

Rebellion
in *America*

Five years after *Al Motawakkel's* accession, he sent one *Yusef*, or *Joseph*, to govern *Armenia*, and *Adherbijan*. This person seized one *Bokrat*, an Armenian nobleman of great eminence, and sent him prisoner to the califf; and this produced a rebellion, in the Armenian nobility, which ended in the defeat and death of *Yusef*. The califf upon this immediately ordered one *Boga*, a Turkish general in his pay to march against the rebels, which he did with such success, that he killed thirty thousand, and made a vast number of them prisoners.

soners. After that, *Boga* marched to *Teflis*, the chief city of *Georgia*, which had been very instrumental in abetting the rebellion, and burnt it to the ground with fifty thousand of its inhabitants. Next year, or soon after, the city of *Damiata* in *Egypt*, was plundered or burnt by the *Greeks*, who are said to have invaded that country with no fewer than 100 ships; and then they destroyed *Moser* in their return and burnt home. But, as they kept none of their conquests, the califf *Al Motawakkel*, rebuilt and repaired *Damiata*, which was before an open town, and rendered it both towards the land and the river, one of the strongest places in the East.

This califf was far from being so indulgent, as the last three of his predecessors were, to the Christians. He ordered both them and the Jews to wear a kind of a leathern belt, and other badges to distinguish them from the *Moslems*, and that they should paint their doors, with the figures of devils, hogs, apes, and other despicable animals. This severity is said to have been occasioned by the imprudence of the califf's physician *Backtishua*, a Christian, which seems to have been the common name of all the physicians of that court. This *Backtishua* was reported to be so rich, that the califf willing to be convinced of the truth, paid him a visit, and was confirmed in what he heard, by the vast profusion and magnificence with which *Backtishua* entertained him, he therefore ordered his effects to be sealed up, and divested him of all his riches: a punishment which he is said to have deserved, by his pride and insolence during his prosperity.

Al Motawakkel acted with much more generosity, tho' hardly with less severity, to another Christian physician, whose name was *Honein*. This person was born a subject to the califf, and his father was an apothecary in the city of *Hira*. Possessing an insatiable thirst after knowledge in his profession, *Honein* first studied under *Yahya*, an eminent physician of *Bagdad*, but being disgusted with him he resided two years in *Greece*, where he collected a noble library, and made himself Master of the Greek language. He then travelled to *Basra*, where he acquired the *Arabic*, and from thence came to *Bagdad*, where his reputation was so great, that *Al Motawakkel* had the curiosity to see him, and was so charm'd with his company, that he determined to take him into particular confidence. He had, however, some apprehension lest *Honein* should be a spy for the Greek emperor, and to prove him thoroughly, the califf ordered him to prepare poison, so strong and so subtle, as to kill a certain person whom he named, without the least suspicion of his having had foul play for his life. *Honein* had generosity enough, to refuse to be concerned in so murderous an affair; upon which, the califf threw him into prison for twelve months, and at the expiration of that term, he threatened him with

Who is
extremely
honoured
by the
califf.

immediate death, if he did not comply with his order. *Honein* had constancy enough to be proof against the most terrible menaces, and told the califf, that the duties of his profession led him to study the health, and not the destruction of mankind. This honest perseverance intirely won him the confidence of the califf, who orderd him to be dressed in a magnificent robe, and settled upon him a pension of about 35,000 l sterling a year. Being thus thoroughly reconciled to *Honein*, he frankly asked him his motives for his conduct; and *Honein*, to what he had said before, added, that his religion as a Christian, commanded him to do good even to his enemies. This partiality however in favour of one Christian did not influence the general tenour of *Al Motawakkel's* conduct; for he had forbid all Jews and Christians of his dominions, to make use either of horses, or of stirrups, and confined them to ride on asses, or mules. Even his favourite *Honein*, seems at last to have fallen under his displeasure. He was by one *Tifuri*, another Christian, accused of being irreligious, and prophane, and this charge went so far, that *Honein* was excommunicated by the Christian clergy. He is said to have died in a few days after under this disgrace, and to have hastened his death by poison. This great physician is celebrated for having founded an excellent school of physic. He translated the works of *Euclid*, and *Ptolemy*; and, according to some, of *Galen*, and *Hipocrates*; tho' others say, that they were translated by his schollars. Several of his works, and those of his friends and descendants, many of whom were eminent physicians, are now in the French king's library.

War with
the Greeks.

About the year of the *Hejra* 241, the war broke out with great fury between the *Moslems* and the *Greeks*; who took the city of *Amorica*, and carried the inhabitants into captivity. Next year the Imperialists advanced against *Samasata*, which they besieged, but on the third day of the siege, the *Moslem* garrison surprized them in a sally, during the time of divine service, and obliged them to retreat to *Aunda*, in *Armenia*; and from thence home: but not till they had carried off ten thousand of the califf's subjects prisoners. All *Asia* about the same time, was most dreadfully afflicted by earthquakes. One is particularly mentioned to have happened at *Komas* in *Tabestran*, which destroyed a vast number of towns, and villages, with forty five thousand of the inhabitants. The like calamities, were felt all over *Syria*, *Persia*, *Korasan*, and *Arabia*; and almost all the inhabitants of the city of *Laodicea* were destroyed. Mountains were sunk, with most dreadful noises and ruin in the sea. The city of *Bagdad* itself was in danger of being overthrown. Whole rivers were dried up, or vanished, and the drought at *Mecca* was such, that no water was to be had, under the rate of one hundred dirhems a bottle.

Those

Those dreadful calamities which extended over the whole The seat
califat, seem to have determined *Al Motawakkel* to remove the of the ca-
seat of the califat from *Samarra*, to *Damascus*. 'Tis impossible, lifat twice
thro' the inaccuracy and obscurity of authors, to give the removed.
reader any precise description of the affairs of the califat, at
this time. We know however in general, that a prodigious
degeneracy of manners prevailed both at court, and amongst
the people. The immense riches of the califf, with the
natural delicacy, and luxury, which reigned in his countries,
corrupted his court; and the inconstancy, the enthusiasm,
and the rebellious disposition of his people, had introduced
a new set of maxims into his government. He did not, like
his wise predecessors, consider himself as the father, but as
the master, of his people; and he sought to rule them, by a
standing army of *Turks*, whom he took into his pay, and
who soon destroyed the authority of their masters. For soon
after he came to *Damascus*, his Turkish guards mutinied for
want of pay; and this, with a dislike he had conceived to the
inhabitants of that city, determined him to abandon it, but he
returned to *Samarra* after a short stay of about two months at
Damascus. At the same time, he put a stop to several mag-
nificent buildings which he had given orders to erect for the
reception of his wealth and treasures, all which he retained at
Samarra. But his severity against the house of *Ali* still con-
tinued, and he ordered *Al Sekkit*, one of the best general scholars
or philologers in his dominions, to be put to death for es-
pousing that interest.

The connections between the eastern and the western History of
Moslems still continued, and in conjunction they made fresh the west-
descents upon the island of *Sicily* where they cut in pieces *Mos-*
nine thousand *Sicilians* and took *Castro Grovauni*, then called *Enna*.
Enna, with its castle and territory. At the same time, they took
and fortified other places of the island. Soon after they
made themselves masters of *Ragusa*. *Abdalrachman* was then
the western califf and reigned with great glory in *Spain*, and
erected a queducts and other works of public utility in *Corduba*
and its neighbourhood, with a taste and magnificence far
superior to any thing which that age produced amongst the
Christians. He died about the 238th year of the *Hejra*, after
reigning above thirty one years, and he left behind him forty
five sons, and forty two daughters, being succeeded by his
eldest son *Mahomet*. A rebellion was raised against this
prince, which was supported by *Ordonius* the son of *Ranimir*,
king of *Galicia*. *Mahomet* however gave him a total defeat
near *Toledo*, killing seven thousand *Moslems*, and eight thou-
sand Christians. He ordered the heads of the prisoners he
took, for the most part, to be cut off; and sent some over
to *Africa*, and some to the sea coasts, as the memorials of
his victory. After that, he placed garrisons in *Curita*, *Tala-*
vera, and *Calatrava*, and obtained several other advantages
against the Christians, and the rebellious *Moslems*. But *Toledo*
still

still refused to open her gates to *Mahomet*, whose general *Al Mounder*, laid its territory and neighbourhood waste to the very gates of that city, with prodigious destruction. The *Toletans* however obliged them to retire, and they attacked *Talavera*, but were repulsed with the loss of seven hundred, and a great many prisoners. After this *Mahomet* advanced in person and laid a formal siege to *Toledo*, which submitted to him upon favourable terms, but not till he had destroyed the noble bridge over the *Tago*. But the *Normans*, who were composed of the inhabitants of the north parts of *Europe*, and of *France* in general, (being no longer awed by *Charlemain*), became now the best troops in *Europe*. Having vast conveniencies for ship-building, they cruised upon the maritime provinces, in fleets of fifty or sixty ships, each carrying about one hundred men, every where committing vast devastations, and plundering wherever they came. Having subdued *France* to the very gates of *Paris*, they ravaged the coasts of *Spain* while *Mahomet* was employed in reducing the city of *Toledo*, and passing over to *Africa*, they plundered that coast, and returning to *Spain* past a whole winter in the maritime provinces there, but *Mahomet*; and his generals made so good a head against them, that they were unable to make any settlement in *Spain*, and upon their return to *France*, *Mahomet* invaded *Navarre*, and took several important fortresses in that country, laying waste the territory about *Pampaluna*. As the *African* provinces, which had the nearest communication with *Spain*, still owned the authority of the eastern califf, they had their share in all the commotions of *Europe*, and were greatly instrumental in the success that attended *Mahomet's* arms.

Their connection with the eastern califf.

Imprudence of the Christians.

The schisms which still continued amongst the Christians of the *Greek* church concerning image worship, were not only disagreeable, but even alarming to *Al Motawakkel*. The *Greek* emperor *Theophilus*, sometimes persecuted, and sometimes practised image-worship; and *Sophronius* the patriarch of *Alexandria*, with *Abu Korra*, a Christian Arab, openly addressed the emperor in defence of it. As those two writers were subjects of the califat, it was not without reason, that *Al Motawakkel* looked upon their doctrines as a species of rebellion against his government, the very foundations of which were laid in an abhorrence to all image-worship, and therefore it is no wonder if he continued to publish edicts against them, with great severity. He even at last went so far, as to deprive them of the common rights of subjects, though not with near such sanguinary penalties, as he inflicted upon the partizans of the house of *Ali*. His severity, however, had the effect of inducing a great number of Christians in his dominions, particularly at *Bagdad*, to make profession of the Mahometan religion, that they might have the liberty to carry on trade, by which many of them grew immensely rich. This persecution of the Christians seems

seems to have drawn on a war between the califf and the emperor, who advanced into the califat at the head of forty-five thousand troops; but he was surprized by a body of thirty thousand *Arabs*, who, according to the *Greek* writers themselves, gave him a total defeat, and would have taken him prisoner, had he not been rescued by *Manuel* his general.

But *Al Motawakkel*, notwithstanding all his glory, was unhappy in his family affairs. He had already parted with a large share of his power to his eldest son *Al Montaser*, who made a very bad use of the indulgence, and, together with his mother, caballed against him; but *Al Motawakkel*, behaved in a very improper way to reclaim him. The califf had himself fallen into the abominable practice of drinking, which at certain times, deprived him of his senses, so that he acted in a frantic, and often in a cruel, manner to his best friends. Sometimes, in the midst of their carousals, which were always very intemperate, he ordered a lion to be brought into the hall where they were seated; sometimes he put serpents, and scorpions under their pillows, and their seats, that he might have the pleasure, when they were bit, to expel the poison with an alexipharmic, which he made use of. At other times he put them to cruel deaths, and when any one pleaded for mercy, he used to tell them, that mercy was only a weakness of the mind. Sometimes he ordered his eldest son, *Al Montaser*, to partake in his debauches, and when he was overcome with liquor, he used to upbraid him, in a bitter manner, and beat, and otherwise punish him most immoderately. All those acts of parricide were performed in public, and were attended by the strongest detestation, which all true *Moslems* had of the califf, both as a sovereign and a father; not to mention the offence they took, at the open violation he was guilty of as to their laws and religion. His second son *Al Motaz*, was by him preferred to the superintendency of his mints, and his name impressed upon the dirhems, a mark of distinction, which seldom used to be paid to any other, than the heirs apparent of the califat, or those who pretended to that dignity.

Cabals against the califf.

His irregularities and drunkenness.

Notwithstanding the many dreadful calamities by earthquakes, irruptions, and inundations, that, during this califf's reign, happened in his dominions, yet they were still extremely populous. At *Bagdad* alone, which we may consider as a city but lately built, no fewer than eight hundred thousand men, and sixty thousand women, attended to the grave the corpse of *Hanbal*, a famous *Moslem* doctor already mentioned, who died there. But even this populousness, which was proportionable through all the other parts of the califat, was terrible to a prince which had given such provocation to his subjects, as *Al Motawakkel* had done. He therefore, most impolitically increased the number of

He encreases the number of his

The Moslem history questionable.

A mock prophet bastinadoed to death.

his foreign mercenaries, the *Turks*, and committed the care of his own person intirely to them, but managed his foreign wars, by his natural born subjects. His generals were *Omar*, *Al Fadl*, and *Ali*. The former, in the year of the Hejra two hundred and forty six, which answers to that of our Lord eight hundred and sixty, penetrated into the imperial territories, from whence he is said to have carried off seven thousand prisoners. *Al Fadl* ravaged their coasts with a fleet, and *Ali* penetrated into another part of the Imperial dominions, from whence he carried off one thousand head of cattle, and five thousand prisoners. The date of those transactions, however, agree but ill with the *Greek* chronology; which seems to place those events twelve years before, but as the *Greeks* are extremely inaccurate, we thought fit to follow the Moslem accounts; though perhaps every thing they relate, as to the success of the *Greeks* at this time, is far from being to be depended on. For had the califf's arms been attended with a perpetual stream of successes, which they represent them to have been, they must have made a conquest of the *Greek* empire, which was far from being the case. For, about the time we now treat of, *Petronus*, the emperor's brother or uncle, gave the *Moslems* a most dreadful defeat, and, according to the *Greek* writers, killed the califf himself. But as this last circumstance is evidently false, it renders their authority in other respects justly questionable.

Notwithstanding all the extravagancies of this califf, he performed some popular acts. Hearing of an impostor, one *Mahomet*, the son of *Faraj*, who pretended to be *Moses* risen from the dead, and thereby occasioned prodigious disturbances in the kingdom, he ordered him to be brought to his court, and being convinced of his blasphemies, and impostures, he commanded his attendants, by way of contempt for such a mock prophet, to bastinate him to death in his presence. But as to the poor wretches he had deluded, he was contented with keeping them in prison, 'till they recovered their senses, which the arts of the impostor had deprived them of. *Al Motawakkel* likewise repaired, or rather rebuilt at a great expence, the famous Nilcometer which had been erected in the island of *Al Fostal*, by the califf *So'yman*, the son of *Abdalmalac*. He likewise greatly enlarged *Samarra*, the place of his residence, and built near it a magnificent palace, and another city, where he sometimes resided, and which he called after one of his own names, *Al Jaaferia*.

But those few acts of popularity, were far from ballancing the hatred into which the califf's vices had brought him. He had carried the persecution of the *Shiits*, and the favourers of *Ali*'s memory, to so inhuman a height, that he now grew detestable to the public. But he still sought to guard himself from their resentment by fresh supplies of

Turkish

Turkish ruffians, whom he kept about his person. At the same time, he was ill advised enough to strip their general, *Wafif*, to whom he had given the command of his guards, of an estate he held in the *Persian Irak*, which he bestowed upon *Fatak* his first minister, and this drove the *Turk* to cabal with *Al Montaser*, for the califf's destruction. This *Fatak*, by his name, and family, seems likewise to have been a *Turk*; and he recommended to the califf's particular favour one *Bagher*, a *Turk*, a man of extraordinary force and courage. The califf having certain intelligence of the cabals that were forming against him, hearing of one of those famous swords, for which his dominions were so noted, and that it was at *Besra*, he ordered his governor there to buy it. But the sword being removed into the province of *Barein*, the califf sent thither an agent, who bought the sword at the expence of no less than ten thousand dinars. It no sooner came to his hand, than he acquainted *Fatak*, that his intention in buying it, was, to bestow it upon the bravest of his *Turkish* officers, who would employ it in his defence. *Fatak* recommended *Bagher*, and *Motawakkel*, immediately, to engage him the more to his service, increased his pay to a vast sum, and giving him the sword, with the compliment of the value he put upon his service, he enjoined him to employ it in his defence. But the first use the ungrateful ruffian made of his sword, was to put his master to death with it.

The califf having retired to the palace of *Al Jaafaria*, there gave himself up to all kind of riot, and debauch, till he contracted an asthma, with which his two favourites *Fatak*, and *Abdallah* the son of *Yahya*, were terribly alarmed. The califf, however trusting to the courage and fidelity, of his *Turkish* guards, was but little moved by their representations, and this confidence destroyed him, for *Al Montaser* having got *Wafif* over to his party, at last formed the execrable design, into which *Bagher* came, of assassinating his father, in the midst of a debauch, in which he was seconded, by other *Turkish* officers, and *Bagher* in particular, besides many of the califf's own domestics. *Al Montaser's* pretext for this unnatural conspiracy, was founded on the frantic conduct of the califf, by which he himself was every moment in danger of his own life; and the cruelties he exercised upon his subjects, particularly upon the descendants, and favourers, of the house of *Ali*.

Those cabals could not be so secretly carried on as not to come to the ears of *Fatak*, and *Abdallah*, the califf's favourites. They represented to him his danger, but without naming *Al Montaser*, and advised him by all means, not to go to the mosque, the following Friday, but to send his son *Al Motaz*, to pray and preach to the people in his room. Upon this representation, the califf ordered his eldest son *Al Montaser*, to perform the service in his stead. But this being

being what the favourites most dreaded, they were obliged to be a little more explicit, and to assure him that a report of his illness would occasion some disorders that might prove fatal to his person, advising him by all means to shew himself in the mosque, that he might take off all impressions of that kind. The califf followed their advice, and after performing the service, he returned to *Al Jaaseria*, where, surrounded by his judges, and counsellors, he bitterly upbraided *Al Montaser*, and his mother, for their unnatural designs, and threatened if they did not lay them aside, he would proceed against them to extremities. This only served to precipitate the califf's fate. For a few nights after, the califf being engaged in a debauch with a number of his companions, *Al Montaser* introduced the conspirators into the palace; one of the gates of which had been left open by an accomplice for that purpose. In the mean time, *Bagher*, who probably was the officer of the guard then in waiting, under colour of his post, turned all the califf's companions who were drinking with him, out of the hall, excepting *Fatak*, and four others. Soon after, the other conspirators rushed in with their swords drawn, and one of the califf's companions imagining, at first, that it was one of his drunken frolics, called out, that that was the night of swords and scymetars, and not of serpents, and scorpions, but seeing *Bagher*, at the head of the conspirators, with his sword, that had been presented him by the califf, in his hand, drawn, they soon discovered their murderous intentions. *Al Motawakkel*, receiving a cut upon the shoulders, called out to the assassin who gave it, "be quiet, God cut off thy hand," and endeavoured to put himself in a posture of defence. *Fatak*, at the same time, drew his scymetar, and bravely interposed in behalf of his master; crying out, "woe be to you, this is the commander of the faithful." But finding them bent upon the murder, "O *Motawakkel*, said he, I will not survive thee," and then invited them to dispatch him likewise, which they were obliged to do before they could kill the califf, and both of them being thus murdered, *Al Montaser* was immediately saluted califf. The *Persian* historians who seem to be the best instructed in this event, relate a ludicrous circumstance attending it. They tell us that the califf's buffoon, having hid himself upon the conspirators entering the hall, and finding he was likely to be discovered, cried out in imitation of *Fatak*, O *Al Motawakkel*, I should be extreamly glad to survive you. This califf was murdered when he was about forty years of age, and in the fifteenth of his reign.

He is killed.

His character.

Al Motawakkel inherited many of the virtues of his family, though in the latter part of his reign he drowned them by intemperance. In his person he was tall and thin, but his face was handsome, and his eyes were large. Like *Al Mamun*,

mun,

him, he was a great encourager of learned men, but found some difficulty to bring the *Greeks* to his court, on account of the jealousy of the *Greek* emperors, who prevented them; because they were unwilling that the *Moslems* should make any acquisitions in literature. We have already seen the reason of the califf's aversion for the Christians, and that was chiefly, if not entirely owing to the idolatry that so grossly prevailed amongst them. A great number of prodigies; or rather what the credulous *Moslems* looked upon as prodigies, distinguished his reign; for we cannot consider the earthquakes, the removal of mountains, the sinking of hills, and the alteration of the course of rivers, and the like calamities, as being any way supernatural. But nothing can evince the credulity of the *Moslems* better than what they tell us, as one of the greatest portents of this reign of prodigies. For we are informed that a bird, in the hearing of the people, called out forty times from a tree, on which it was perched, "serve and fear God, God, God," and returning several times, repeated the same words. Though it is plain, that nothing is easier than to instruct birds to use such forms of speech, and though it is more than probable, that this bird had escaped from some Christian master, yet the words he pronounced were looked upon to be so miraculous, that *Al Motawakkel* had the curiosity in person to examine above five hundred people who heard them pronounced. The like observations may be made, upon other prodigies of this reign, which we now take our leave of.

A Moslem
imposture

*Al Montaser the eleventh califf of the house of
Al Abbas.*

THOUGH this prince was well known to have been at the head of the conspiracy in which his father fell, yet he was at great pains to deny and disguise the fact. As soon as he was proclaimed califf, he assembled together the chief officers of his court, and the inhabitants of *Jaffaria*, and in a formal declaration, which was read by *Ahmed*, one of his secretaries, he strongly disclaimed his being accessory to his father's death, which he laid upon *Fatak*, whom he said he had punished with death upon that account. This dissimulation alarmed the *Turkish* officers, who had been executioners of that murder, and, after holding a consultation amongst themselves, they determined to oblige the califf to deprive his two brothers of their rights of succession to the califat. This they insisted upon not only

Al Montaser
denies
his being
accessary
to his fa-
ther's
death.

He is
forced to
alter the
succession,

only as a security to themselves in case of the califf's death; but because they knew it would weaken the interest of those princes, even in his life time. They accordingly laid their demands before the califf, who now was too sensible of their power, to deny them any thing; and the two brothers understanding what had happened, for their own safety, thought proper to offer to the califf a voluntary resignation of all their right of succession to the empire. This generous conduct, which was as necessary for the califf as for their own safety, touched *Al Montaser* so much that he is said to have reproached the *Turkish* officers, even in the presence of his brothers, with what they had obliged him to do. He even was compelled to acquaint *Mahomet*, the grandson of the great *Taber*, and at that time governor of *Bagdad*, that his two brothers, sensible of their incapacity for ruling so great an empire, had voluntarily desired to resign their rights; he notified the same to all the governors of his provinces, and the other great man of his empire.

His remorse,

Al Montaser finding himself no better than the slave of his own insolent mercenaries, and stung with remorse for what he had done, and haunted by terrifying dreams, applied to a friend, *Abdallah* the son of *Amra*, who counselled him to divert his melancholy by enjoying the pleasures of life. But a wounded conscience is not to be cured by such pursuits. He observed one day a piece of very fine *Persian* tapestry, which had belonged to his father's wardrobe, and in it was wrought the picture of a man in a royal habit, with a diadem, and an inscription in the old *Persic* language, round his head. *Al Montaser*, curious to know the meaning of the inscription sent for a *Persian*, who after making some excuses, at last told him, that the inscription was, "I am *Shiruyeh* the son of *Khosru Parviz*, who murdered my father, and reigned only six months." As the story of *Shiruyeh*, was well known to the *Moslems*, *Al Montaser* instantly applied the words to himself; as indeed did most of his great men, who foretold that his reign would not be longer than that of *Shiruyeh*. The califf's melancholy encreased, he fancied his father appeared to him in his sleep, and threatened him with death and hell fire; and at the end of six months he fell ill of a quinsy, or as others say, a fever, which put an end to his life; but others, with great shew of probability, say he was poisoned.

death and

character.

This califf was but twenty-five years of age at the time of his death, and had it not been for the hand he had in his father's murder, he had virtues to have won the affections of his subjects. Though he is said to have loved money, yet one of his friends complaining that he had not wherewithal to purchase a beautiful *Egyptian* slave, whom he was passionately fond of, *Al Montaser*, unknown to him, bought her at a great price, and made a present of her to his friend;

with

with a very fine set of jewels which he gave her as a gift. He eased the *Shiites* of some of the hardships that had been inflicted upon them by his two immediate predecessors. In his person he was majestic and fat; his eyes were large and black, and his nose aquiline. He was by nature brave and just, and some specimens of his talents in poetry have been preserved to the present times.

Al Mostain Billah, *the twelfth califf of the house of*
Al Abbas.

THE course of succession to the califat was so capricious and uncertain, and so many princes descended from former califfs, were at this time alive, that the *Turks*, who now governed every thing by the sword, were at no loss to fix upon a successor, with a specious title to the califat. They pitched upon *Ahmed*, the grandson of *Al Mostafem*, who on account of his pliable temper, seemed to be fitter than any other for their purpose. He was very indolent, and of a disposition to be governed by those who were about him, and the *Turks* resolved to keep possession of his person. The heads of those mercenaries, at this time were *Wafif*, the two *Bogas* and *Bagher*, the same who had put to death, *Al Motawakkel*. Their power was so great all over the empire, that no competitor durst oppose *Ahmed*, who took the name of *Al Mostain*, by which he is known in history, on the day of the accession.

He is succeeded by

Al Mostain.

Power of the *Turks*.

But notwithstanding the power and credit of the *Turks*, they were excessively hated by all the true Moslem subjects of the califat, and a strong party was formed in favour of *Al Motaz*, brother to the late califf. He was considered as a sacrifice to the pride and tyranny of the *Turks*, and his behaviour under his misfortunes had gained him a great many friends. *Al Mostain*, the day he was raised to the califat, appointed *Atamash*, to be his vizir, or first minister, and *Ahmed* to be his secretary of state. But the first day he appeared in public, clothed in his imperial robes, his guards were attacked, by about one hundred foot, and fifty horse, crying out, Long live *Al Motaz*. The califf's guards however, engaged the rebels, and after a fierce encounter, put them to the sword, very few escaping. This insurrection being suppressed, the new califf ordered *Al Motaz*, and *Al Moawaid* his brother, to be confined in prison, but this severity was far from restoring quiet to his government. The people were every where discontented at it. One *Yakub* rose in arms at *Sajestan*, and the people of *Hems* obliged the califf's governor to fly out of their territory. Foreign misfortunes.

They are hated by

the *Mos-*

Who are misfortunes attended those domestic commotions, for in the defeated 249th year of the Hejra, a few months after the califf's accession, the Moslems, met with a great defeat from the Greeks. *Greek Al Marj Al Askaf*, and the conquerors laid waste the califf's country, or put it under contribution as far as *Mesopotamia*.

The califf *Al Mostain* continued all this time at *Samarra*, a kind of illustrious prisoner to his *Turkish* mercenaries, who usurped all the power, civil as well as military, of the califat. This was resented by *Atamashk*, the vizir, who knowing how much the *Turks* were hated throughout the empire, advised his master to discard them, and to throw himself into the hands of his natural born subjects. The *Turkish* officers quickly found that their credit was declining at court, and stirring up their soldiers to a mutiny, they murdered the vizir with another of the ministers, and rifled the house of the former, of all its immense wealth. *Wasif* and *Boga*, were at the head of this insurrection, and the people of *Bagdad*, who hated them before, no sooner heard of the tragedies that had been acted than they grew outrageous. They broke into and plundered the houses of all whom they conceived to be friends to the *Turkish* government, and even those of many people of wealth, carrying off vast quantities of effects and money, all which they wisely distributed amongst their own country troops, to indemnify them for what they suffered, through the partiality of the government of the *Turks*, and to encourage them to protect them against their tyranny. Part of those troops were quartered upon the frontiers, and part in garrison at *Bagdad*, and all of them vowed revenge against the *Turks*.

Two rebellions breakout. In the mean while, that is, about the 250th year of the Hejra, two rebellions broke out against the califf, headed by two descendants of the house of *Ali*, one called *Yahya*, who rebelled at *Cusa*, and the other *Hasan*, who secured to himself the province of *Tabrestan*. The former was soon defeated and slain near *Cusa* by *Mahomet*, one of the califf's generals, and his head was publicly exposed at *Samarra*. But *Hasan* erected *Tabrestan* into a kind of independent principality, and though at first he was defeated by the califf's generals, yet he kept possession of it for nineteen years. He was succeeded by his brother, who reigned in the same province for eighteen years. The truth is, *Egypt*, *Africa*, many parts of *Persia*, and towards the *Indus*, were splitted into independent governments, and though the several sovereigns acknowledged the superiority of the califf, yet they never obeyed him farther than they thought was consistent with their own interest. The people of *Hems*, in the same year, after killing *Al Fadh* the califf's governor, as he was endeavouring to regain his authority, were defeated with great slaughter, by his successor *Musa*, the son of *Boga*, who burnt

burnt down their city, and filled their territory with their own blood.

The *Turks* growing every day more and more despotic in the Dissen-califat, at last received a blow through their own dissensions. Having disagreed about the partition of power, they split into two factions, one of them headed by *Wasif*, and the other by *Bagher*. *Wasif* had the greatest interest with the califf, but *Bagher*, with the soldiery, whom he disposed to dethrone the califf. But before any final resolution, could be taken on that head, *Bagher's* enemies found means to arrest him, and they persuaded the califf, that the best way to defeat the attempts of his party, was, to put him to death; which was accordingly done. But this exasperated the troops, who were in *Bagher's* interest, so much, that they united more firmly than ever, and taking arms, they not only plundered the imperial city of *Samarra*, but threatened to destroy the califf in his palace, if *Wasif*, and *Boga*, whom they looked upon as the author's of *Bagher's* death, were not delivered up to them. Those two officers seeing the extremity to which they were reduced, became in their turns, dependent upon the califf, and advised him by all means, to suffer them to attend him, in making his escape to *Bagdad*, where he was sure of being received and being powerfully supported. The califf followed their advice, and with difficulty escaped in a small bark, but the *Turks* no sooner understood that he was safely arrived at *Bagdad*, than they sent a deputation to that city, and promising that if the califf would return to *Samarra*, they would return to their obedience. *Mahomet* the grandson of *Taber*, then commanded in *Bagdad*, but his power and influence were such, that he was subject to the califf, no farther than he thought proper. He had however, an invincible aversion to the *Turks*, and dismissed their deputies with the utmost contempt, without even permitting them to have access to the califf's presence.

The deputies returning to *Samarra*, reported the unsuccessful event of their commission, upon which the *Turks* declared *Al Mostain* to be divested of the califat, and they declared *Al Motaz*, whom they took out of prison, to be the lawful califf. Ambition prevailed with *Al Motaz*, to stifle all resentment against the *Turks*, who had been the murderers of his father, and the authors of all his own misfortunes. He took quiet possession of the throne and palace at *Samarra*, and sent his younger brother *Abmed*, if we may believe some of the Moslem authors, at the head of fifty thousand men, (though others come far short of that number), to besiege the late calif at *Bagdad*.

Al Mostain was in a very disagreeable situation in that city. *Mahomet* the governor of it, who was in the interest of the house of *Motawakkel*, had espoused his interest, chiefly out of hatred to the *Turks*, and he defended him from the

Who declares *Al Motaz* califf.

the same motive. *Ahmed* having formed the siege of *Bagdad*, found himself unable to take it; the defence made by *Al Mostain* was so vigorous. But *Mahomet* perceiving that *Al Mostain* was entirely under the influence of *Wafif*, and *Boga*, and being (according to some authors) apprehensive of a design they had formed to assassinate him, found means to enter upon the terms of an accommodation with *Ahmed*. It now appeared, that *Mahomet's* aversion to the *Turks* arose chiefly from his jealousy, lest they should subvert his own power. For *Al Motaz* having, by *Ahmed*, given him a full assurance of his being continued governor of *Bagdad*, gave up the interest of *Al Mostain*, and obliged him to renounce the califat, and to consent to retire to an honourable privacy. It likewise appears, that *Wafif* and *Boga*, obtained terms for themselves, and that *Wafif* was restored to his command over the *Turkish* troops. This agreement was solemnly signed and ratified by *Al Mostain*, and subscribed by all his own judges at *Bagdad*. *Al Mostain* was then suffered to retire to a magnificent palace in *Basra*, but under a strict confinement. From thence he was removed to *Wafet*, and from thence, according to some, to *Samarra*, where he was murdered, by the command of *Al Motaz*; but upon the whole, though it is certain that he was put to death by that califf's order, yet the manner of it, and the persons by whom it was committed, is still doubtful. When his head, according to the barbarous usage of that country, was brought to *Al Motaz*, he was playing at chess, and having finished his game he viewed it with great delight, but ordered it to be buried.

His death and
character. *Al Mostain* reigned about four years, and was thirty-two at the time of his death. We have little to add, as to his character, to what we have already observed. His greatest failing and misfortune appears to have been, his giving himself entirely up to favourites; and if we are to judge by his defence of *Bagdad*, he was far from being destitute of personal courage. His aspect is said to have been handsome, his person fat, and his beard black.

Al Motaz the thirteenth califf of the house of Al Abbas.

Succeeded by *Al Motaz*. **T**HE accession of *Al Motaz* to the throne of the califat, created a total alteration in his manners and principles. He was young, and was reckoned the handsomest man in all his vast empire, circumstances which undoubtedly operated strongly in his favour, especially, when the sufferings he had undergone were considered. He is said to have inherited his beauty from his mother *Fatima*, who was one of the

the finest women in her time, and for that reason, was called by her husband, *Al Motawakkel*, *Fatiba*, or the *Ugly*, by way of contrast. But on the other hand, she was immensely covetous, and after heaping up incredible sums of money, and numbers of jewels, she buried them by way of precaution, without suffering them to be of use either to herself or to her son, which afterwards proved his ruin.

The attention which *Al Motaz* had been obliged to give to the siege of *Bagdad*, had occasioned prodigious disorders, all over the califat at the time of his accession. It was over run by pretenders, and rebels, all of them descendants from the house of *Ali*. Two of them were named *Al Hasan*, and one of them, who set up at *Tabrestan*, has been already mentioned. The other declared himself califf at *Deylam*, and not only defeated the califf's forces, who were sent to subdue him, but made himself master of *Medina*. After this he besieged *Mecca*, but that city being always strongly defended through the great number of pilgrims resorting to it, he spent two months before it in vain, and then retired to *Jeda* the principle sea-port of the *Meccans*, from which he cut them off; and his parties, at the same time, infested the roads so greatly, that a stop was put to all the pilgrimages, which were the chief dependance of the *Meccans*. In a short time, however, he returned of a sudden, and surprizing a vast number of the *Meccans* assembled for their devotion upon mount *Arafat*, he put some of them to the sword, and obliged others to ransom themselves. But we understand that soon after he died, in what manner is not mentioned, and his rebellion perished with himself.

From this and many other instances, which happened about the same time, it is plain that the degeneracy of the *Moslems* was every day encreasing; and that many of the natives, whose ancestors had acquired so much glory to themselves, during the reigns of the first five or six califfs, had, in a manner, lost their courage and virtues. Some of the western *Arabs*, however, who went by the name of *Magrebians*, still distinguished themselves by both; and a great body of them were taken into pay by *Al Motaz*, under the command of *Al Valid*, very probably with a view to counter-balance the *Turks*, whom he secretly hated. He likewise took into his service some *Egyptian* horsemen, who were afterwards so famous, under the name of *Mamaluks*. With this accession of strength, and having, as he thought, made sure of *Mahomet* the governor of *Bagdad*, he opened to the latter his intention of cutting off the chief *Turks* in his service, and putting an end to the slavery, to which, in a manner, they had reduced the sovereigns of the califat. *Mahomet*, for reasons best known to himself, found means to dissuade *Al Motaz* from his resolution; so that far from following it, the califf was inspired with such a dread of the *Turks*, that he raised them to greater credit than ever, and committed himself and concerns intirely into their hands.

This vast increase of credit produced fresh dissention amongst the *Turkish* generals, and *Boga* the elder, jealous of the power of the others, retired with the body under his command to *Mausel*.

Sedition
of the
Turks.

The main body however still remained at *Samarra*, and mutined for their pay. The distraction of his government, with the ambition and avarice of his governors, had kept *Al Motaz* so poor, that being unable to satisfy their demands, he employed *Wafif*, their head general to appease their sedition. But instead of succeeding he was himself cut in pieces by some of the most desperate amongst them, and the mutineers for some time remained without a head.

The califf
puts his
brother to
death.

In the mean while, the distractions of *Al Motaz*'s government, through his own suspicion and jealousy, every day encreased. Instead of strengthening himself by the interest of his brother *Al Mowaiad*, which was very great in the empire, he not only deprived him of his undoubted right of succession to it, but sent him to prison where he died, as is said, by the califf's orders. Such precautions however were taken, that when his body by the califf's order was exposed, the judges and doctors of the law, with the heads of the *Turkish* soldiery, who were inclined to revenge *Al Mowaiad*'s death, finding no marks of violence upon it, concluded he had died in a natural way, and matters were for that time kept easy. But *Ahmed*, another of the califf's brothers, discovering an uneasiness at *Mowaiad*'s death, was sent into a kind of banishment in the eastern parts of the province of *Bagdad*. About this time, *Mahomet* the governor of *Bagdad*, who had had so great a share in the late revolution, died; and delivered *Al Motaz* from the dread of a subject who was become too powerful.

Account
of the
*Magrabi-
ans*.

Al Motaz could not have supported himself so long as he did, under the various errors of his government, had it not been for the *Magrabiens* he employed under *Al Walid*, against the elder *Boga*. That *Turk* hearing of the murder of *Wafif*, declared he would punish the mutineers, and under that pretext, proceeded at the head of his troops to

Hej. 254.
A.D. 868.

Mausel. But the califf readily guessing that his true intention was to dethrone himself, ordered *Al Walid* to intercept him in his march, and to give him battle. The event was, that *Boga* was intirely defeated by the *Magrabiens*, and himself taken prisoner; and the califf hearing of his death, ordered *Al Walid* to strike off his head, which was instantly done. This happened in the 254th year of the Hejra, answering to the year of God 868.

Character
of *Tolun*.

This success in fact ruined *Al Motaz*. He had been incautious enough to trust the government of *Egypt* to the hands of *Tolun* the son of *Ahmed*, a *Turkish* slave, though he himself was born at *Bagdad*. This *Ahmed* notwithstanding the meanness of his extraction, was one of the most extraordinary men of his age; he retained about him all the noble manners of the court of *Al Mamun*, whose slave his father

father had been ; but having obtained the government of *Egypt*, intirely by the interest of the *Turks*, and having married the daughter of *Babac*, the former *Turkish* governor of that province, and being at the same time acquainted with the cruelty and bad principles of the califf, he remained, on all occasions, inflexibly attached to the *Turkish* interest, so that *Al Motaz* had little to expect from that great province, when he took the resolution, at this time, of getting rid of his *Turkish* mercenaries. His success against *Boga* encouraged him to put the younger *Boga* his son to death, at *Samarra*, and the young man having done nothing to deserve it, the *Turks* looked upon it, as an act of egregious cruelty. The califf however trusting to his *Magrabbians*, discovered, more and more, his disgust at the *Turks*, who now thought themselves in point of self-defence, obliged to enter into a combination against him.

For this purpose they chose *Saleb*, the son of *Wafif* their late general, for their leader. *Saleb*, was no way disaffected towards the califf, and *Al Motaz*, might still have maintained his ground, had he been in a condition to have satisfied, even the just demands of his soldiery. But not only the *Turks*, but some of his *Magrabbians*, and *Egyptians*, were now ravenous after their pay, and they proceeded in a body to the califf's palace, where they demanded it. *Saleb*, however, found means to moderate their demands, and they offered to return to their duty and be satisfied, if the califf would pay them fifty thousand dinars. *Al Motaz*, unable to raise even this trifling sum, applied for it to his mother, *Fatiba*, whom he had reason to believe was immensely rich. She unnaturally refused to give him any, pretending she had none ; though it was afterwards found, that besides her jewels, she was at that very time worth, above one million of dinars in ready money. The *Turks* and the other troops, exasperated by this disappointment, broke into the palace, and dragging the califf from his chamber, after beating him in a most unmerciful degree, and exposing his naked body to the intense heat of the sun, obliged him to sign an instrument of formal abdication of the califat, before witnesses, and amongst others, before the governor of *Bagdad*. At the same time they plundered the house of the vizir, and being instigated by *Mahomet*, the surviving son of *Boga*, they were guilty of many other enormities. As to the califf himself after he had signed his abdication, he was carried in exquisite torture to a damp, nauseous dungeon, where according to the best authorities, he died of excessive thirst and hunger. Some say, that he was carried to *Bagdad* before his death, but all agree, that it was occasioned by his being deprived of all the common necessities of life. The resignation he had been forced to make, was in favour of *Al Mohtedi* the son of the late califf *Al Watbeck*.

Al Motaz is said to have been murdered in the twenty-second year of his age, after a troublesome reign of about rather.

History of
the death
of the ca-
liff.

three years and a half, calculating from the abdication of *Al Mostain*. We have already mentioned the beauty of this califf's person, to which his mind was so far from corresponding, that he is considered as being the weakest prince that had ever sat upon the Moslem throne. It must however be admitted that none of his predecessors ever had equal difficulties to struggle with, as he had. The insolence of the *Turkish* mercenaries, and the tragedies committed by them, during the three preceding reigns, had abolished all respect, especially in the distant provinces, for the person and government of the califf, so that *Al Motaz* was without those resources of power and riches, which his predecessors enjoyed.

Al Mohtadi the fourteenth califf of the house of Al Abbas.

Succeeded by *Al Mohtadi*.

He forces *Fatiba* to give up her vast treasures.

Virtues and reforms of the califf.

THE murderers of *Al Motaz* had obliged him before his death to acknowledge *Al Mohtadi* as califf; so that there was no dispute concerning the succession. His mother, whose name was *Karb*, is said to have been a Christian, and perhaps the virtuous education he had received, was owing to her. When he mounted the Moslem throne, he was so far from considering himself, as having any hand in the death of his predecessor, that he performed the funeral service over him. But finding his finances intirely exhausted, he was obliged to have recourse to *Fatiba*, whom he compelled to deliver up her treasures, amounting to one million, three hundred thousand dinars; besides quantities of jewels, which in value, far exceeded that sum. When this vast treasure, was brought to light, *Saleb* the son of *Wajif*, could not help cursing *Fatiba*, whose soul he said was ugly, though her body was beautiful; for having suffered her son to perish for want of so inconsiderable a sum, as fifty thousand dinars. As to *Fatiba*, she immediately retired to *Mecca*, where in her turn, she vented her execrations against *Saleb*.

Al Mohtadi, considering the late disorders as having their foundations in the immorality, and irreligion that had prevailed in the courts of the califfs, and their total disregard of all discipline, endeavoured to introduce, an effectual reformation throughout the califat. Being enabled by the vast sums he had received from *Fatiba*, to discharge the debt due to the soldiery, he proceeded to ease his subjects of some part of their taxes. He reduced the unnecessary expences of his court, by prohibiting in it the use of wine, and all strong liquors, and by banishing from it buffoons, jesters, pretended prophets, singing men, and singing women, and gaming of all kinds; he likewise discharged all

the

the hounds and the lions, which had been maintained by his predecessors at a vast expence, and not only administered justice to his subjects in person every day, but regularly examined the administration of justice, in the courts under him; and heard twice a week all the complaints of oppression or grievances made by his subjects.

But even these exemplary virtues in the califf, were not sufficient to retrieve the affairs of his empire; so desperate were they become by the late mismanagements. He scarcely was seated upon the throne, than one *Ali*, a bold rebel and impostor, who pretended to be lineally descended, from the house of the califf *Ali*, began to appear in *Tanguebar*, one of the most distant provinces of the califat, lying contiguous to *Nubia*, *Ethiopia*, and the country of the *Caseres*. *Ali* had resided in those parts for five or six years, and by pretending to great skill in astrology, and to other supernatural endowments, he got together a great number of the barbarians inhabiting those countries, the rudest of any perhaps in the world, and who went by the general name of *Zenjians*. Some of them were *Moslems* others *Idolaters*, or idolatrous Christians, many of them worshiped the fire, but the greatest part, had scarce any idea at all of religion. *Ali* however knew so well how to manage them by his arts, and impudence, that he fell into the califat at the head of a great army, and by pretending, a vast zeal for the *Shiits*, it increased to such a degree, that he made himself master of *Ramla*, and *Basra*, and passing the *Tigus* he in fact conquered the *Persian Irak* with a great part of *Arahia* itself, and bad defiance to all the troops of the califat, whom he defeated in many encounters. At last, he had the assurance to declare himself, an independant monarch, under the title of *Sahab Al Zenj* or the head of the *Zenjians*, who were the principal strength of his army, and seem originally to have inhabited the country called by Ptolemy *Agisymba*.

Rebellion
of *Ali* a-
gainst
him.

Al Mohtadi, at this time was endeavouring to conciliate to himself the affections of the soldiery, and had succeeded so far, that he had got the *Magrabians* intirely on his side. But *Al Hasan*, the same who had seized upon *Tabrestan* persisting in his usurpation, the late califf or his predecessor, had ordered *Musa* the son of *Boga*, the same who had been put to death, in the late reign, to march against the rebel. *Musa* instead of executing his orders, hearing of the revolutions that had happened at *Samarra*, marched his army back to that capital, and under pretence of revenging the death of *Al Motaz*, he declared his resolution of exterminating *Saleh*, and his adherents. *Saleh*, at this time acted as vizir, or first minister to *Al Mohtadi*, and no longer retained any authority amongst the *Turkish* troops. Therefore upon the approach of *Musa*, giving over all hopes of being able to make a stand against them, he endeavoured to abscond. But *Musa*, having made himself master of *Samarra*, soon discovered

And of
Al Hasan.

covered him, and striking off his head, it was carried thro' the streets of *Samarra* as the head of a traitor, who had imbrued his hands in the blood of his sovereign.

Death and

It appears as if the califf, at this time, had been at *Jaafariq* or in the palace there, and had trusted his safety to the *Magrarians*, and his *Egyptian* horse, all the *Turks* having joined *Musa*, and *Bankial*, another *Turk* who was next to him in command. They had as yet made no open declaration against the califf, so that he found means to get *Bankial* into his power, and upon the *Turks* tumultuously demanding his release, struck off his head, and threw it out of the palace amongst the other *Turks*, in resentment of the indignity he had suffered, and as an evidence that he was not to be intimidated. This spirited conduct might have done the califf great service, had he been properly supported, but the *Turks* were stronger than his *Magrarians* and *Egyptians*, who drew up before the palace. A bloody dispute ensued, in which the califf at the head of his troops, behaved with great courage; and about four thousand fell in the conflict. But the *Turks* being reinforced by a fresh body of ten thousand, under *Tugarba*, the brother of *Bankial*, the *Magrarians* were obliged to give way, and the califf himself after receiving two dangerous wounds being secreted in a private house, was there taken by the barbarians, who demanded him to renounce his dignity. But *Al Mohtadi*, behaved with invincible magnanimity, and refusing to do it, he was treated with all kinds of indignities, and at last put to an excruciating death by one of *Bankial's* kinsmen, who is said to have been such a monster, that he drank of his blood, after he was dead.

character
of the ca-
liff.

This califf at the time of his murder was about thirty-nine years of age. He had a noble mien, and a comely look; but he was bald, and swarthy, and of a middling stature. He proposed the great *Omar*, the successor of *Abubeker*, as the model of his government, and imitated him in all his virtues, and in the sweetness of his manners, but had few opportunities of displaying them, being murdered, before he had sat a full year on the Moslem throne.

*Ahmed Al Motamed the fifteenth califf of the house
of Al Abbas.*

Succeed-
ed by *Al*
Motamed.

THIS califf who goes by the name of *Al Motamed*, was the third son of the califf *Al Motawakkel*, and the same whom his elder brother *Al Motaz* had banished to the eastern parts of the province of *Bagdad*. His first minister was *Abdallah*, who had been employed in the same rank by his father

ther *Al Motawakkel*. The beginning of his reign was disturbed by the vast progress made by *Ali* the prince of the *Zenjans*, who now assumed the name of *Al Habib*. That successful rebel defeated *Ialan*, a general sent against him by the califf, and after destroying his army which was very considerable, he returned to *Basra*, and surprized in the bay of that city, twenty-four capital ships belonging to the califf, which had been employed to act against him. He then besieged and took *Obola*, which he laid in ashes after destroying a great number of the inhabitants. *Abadan* next fell into his hands; and with it a large sum of money, and at last he became the entire master of the whole province of *Abwas*; and even *Bagdad* itself trembled at his successes. But the people of *Basra* and those provinces, proving as inconstant to the prince of the *Zenjans*, as they had been to the califfs, and the house of *Ali*, he had great difficulty in maintaining his conquests; particularly the city of *Basra*. For, in the year 257 of the Hejra, *Said*, another general under the califf, advancing against *Al Habib*, with a fresh army, was overthrown by the rebel with vast slaughter. But in the mean time the city of *Basra*, had thrown off *Al Habib's* yoke, which obliged him once more to turn his arms against it, and after reducing it he put to death above twenty thousand of its inhabitants. We are likewise told, that in the same year he defeated others of the califf's generals.

Successes
of *Ali* or
Al Habib.

It may be proper to observe to the reader, that though those commanders whom we meet with in every page of this califf's history, are said to have been his generals, yet they were in fact no other, than a set of little governors who acted for themselves, under the sanction of his name and authority. The califat in reality was now dismembered, and become no better than the shadow of what it had been under the great *Al Rashid*, and his son *Al Mamun*. The uniting the temporal and spiritual honours in the persons of the califfs, gave them undoubtedly prodigious advantages, when they happened to be men of abilities and morals correspondent to those two high characters. But many of the *Moslems*, since the erection of the califat, as we have already seen, had entertained secret disgusts at the uniting the two dignities in one person. The *Shiites* denied all the califfs, since the death of *Hosein*, to be true imans or high priests; and consequently maintained that they were not entitled to the rights of the califat. This was not the way of thinking that prevailed in other parts of the califf's dominions; where the subjects, in general, began to open their eyes and to admit the califf to be the true iman, but did not admit the consequence of his being their temporal sovereign on that account. It is plain, from what has been already mentioned, and from what is to follow of the history

of the califfs, that the latter was the prevailing opinion at the time we now treat of.

Power of
Al Habib. *Al Habib* was now at the head of above eighty thousand regular troops; and had it not been for the califf's brother who was one of the greatest men that empire ever produced; the califf could not have maintained even that shadow of superiority in his empire that was now left him. *Isa*, the son of *Scheith* had usurped the government of Syria. *Al Hasan* the prince of *Tabrestan*, had seized upon *Jorjan*, and *Yakub*, a *Saffrarian*, upon *Balk* and *Cabut*; while the *Turks* still continued their tyranny over the califf and his court; and *Al Habib* gave a fresh overthrow to *Mahomet*, who acted under the califf's authority.

Mowaffek
declared
next in
succession
to the ca-
liff's son.

Such was the untowardly desperate state of the califat when *Al Motamed* thought of putting his affairs entirely into his brother's hands. It is very probable that till this time, the califf had been infected with the common jealousy of brotherhood, which he excluded from the succession, by giving the preference to his own son; and that nothing but the desperate state of his affairs could have induced him to have taken him into power. This he did in so unreserved a manner, that he nominated him next in succession to *Jaafar* his own son. At the same time, the califf invested his brother, who owed to him the name of *Al Mowaffek*, with a most magnificent habit, and gave him the government of *Diyar*, *Rabia*, *Mawjel*, *Amawfen*, and *Egypt*, or rather gave him a commission to recover those provinces to the califat, from the rebels who had usurped them. The first subject of their deliberation after this was the means of delivering the government from the tyranny of the *Turks*. But though *Al Mowaffek* had both the spirit and inclination to have attempted this, yet he found it impracticable, during the distractions of the califat, which were every day increasing, and he therefore advised his brother, to defer it 'till a more favourable opportunity should present.

War with
Al Habib. *Al Habib* was the great object of their attention, and after *Jaafar* the califf's son, had been named to the nominal prefecture of the West, *Al Mowaffek*, and one *Mosleh* marched at the head of a great army, against that formidable tyrant. Both armies being equally eager for an engagement, they soon joined battle; which was fought with prodigious obstinacy; but ended in the defeat of the califf's troops, one of their generals *Mosleh*, being killed with an arrow. But here *Mowaffek*, who, now remained the sole in command, gave the first proof of his amazing military abilities, by rallying his troops though they had suffered greatly in the battle, and forming them in so masterly a manner, that the enemy durst not pursue their advantage. *Mowaffek's* chief study after this, seems to have been to discipline his soldiers, which he did to so good purpose, that they first became equal,

equal, and then superior to *Al Habib's* veterans. Every day produced actions in which neither could boast of any superiority, excepting in one, in which *Yubya*, one of *Al Habib's* generals, was beat, wounded, and taken prisoner. He was then sent to *Samarra*, where he suffered the death of a rebel, by being cruelly whipt, and having his hands and feet chopt off, and then his body reduced to ashes. A pestilential distemper however, breaking out amongst *Al Mowaffek's* troops, he was obliged to agree to a cessation of arms, and to put them into quarters about *Waset*. It seems to have been during this campaign, that *Amazur*, a general under the califf, defeated *Ija*, the son of *Sheikh*, and recovered *Syria*, or rather part of it, to the califf's allegiance, though perhaps no more is meant than that he reduced it to his own power.

Matters seem to have continued in an uncertain situation, between the troops of the califf and those of *Habib*, during the winter of the 259th year of the Hejra; after this the military operations commenced with great vigour. It appears as if the califf himself was become now so extreamly indolent that the executive part of his government, rested upon his brother *Al Mowaffek*. This perhaps was the reason, why that great man, did not make this campaign in person, against *Al Habib*, who still continued master of the rich city, and province of *Abwaz*, where he put fifty thousand of the califf's subjects to death, and demolished the fortifications. The califf sent two armies against him, one under *Al Mowalled* his son, who seems to have done nothing worth mentioning, and another under *Abdalrahman* the son of *Mcfteh*, who was equally unsuccessful, several battles however were fought, but it is to be presumed, not to the advantage of the califf. One *Ishak*, about the same time was sent to recover *Basra*, at the head of an army, and *Ibrahim* the son of *Suria*, was sent with another against *Dawrad*, but all of them seem to have effected nothing further, than to check the progress of *Al Habib*, and to prevent him from even making himself master of *Bagdad* itself.

Hej. 259.
A.D. 872.

who re-
mains vic-
torious.

The Moslem historians have been so inaccurate, as to confound the operations in different districts of the same province, as if they had been directed against the whole province itself. Many petty tyrants availing themselves of the low circumstances of the califat, began now to erect powerful kingdoms, and principalities, out of territories, which under the great califfs, were looked upon only as being petty districts. *Mahomet* the grandson, or great grandson, of the great *Taber*, continued still in his family's right, to be governor, or rather sovereign of *Korasan*; but he was now dispossessed of it by *Yakub* the son of *Al Leit*, who imprisoned him, all his followers, and domestics. The like disorders prevailed through the other provinces, and the

Mahomet
Taber im-
prisoned.

Musa
made go-
vernor of
Fars and
other pro-
vinces.

the *Arabs* made one *Beftimur*, governor of *Hems*, having put to death *Manjur*, in the 260th year of the Hejra. It appears from the consequences, as if *Al Mowaffek*, had been employed, during all the time of his retirement from the field, in sowing jealousies amongst those petty tyrants, so as to bring them to cut one anothers throats, in which he succeeded perfectly well. For in the 261st year of the Hejra the califf's governor of *Fars*, was put to death by *Mahomet* the son of *Wafel*, who becoming thereby master of that province, which of itself was a great and noble kingdom, he grew jealous of *Al Habib*, and for some time they carried on war with one another. The califf understanding this dissention between two of his chief rebels, gave to *Musa* the son of *Boga*, who was an excellent commander, the government of *Fars*, *Abwaz*, *Basra*, and *Barhein*, in expectation that *Musa*, by his own abilities, and the great interest he had with the *Turks*, would be able to recover them from the rebels. *Musa*, could he have accomplished that design, would have been a much greater prince, than the califf himself was at this time; but all the advantage he had on his side, was a sanction of the califf's name and authority, which was still respectable among the rebels. He employed *Abdalrahman* and *Tifam* a *Turk*, to go with an army, in the califf's name, and to take possession of *Abwas*. But *Mahomet*, who was now master of great part of it, engaged and defeated him, with vast slaughter, taking *Abdalrahman* prisoner. *Musa* was then on his march, with an army to support his two generals; but understanding that they had been entirely defeated, he did not chuse to stand another action with *Mahomet*, who was marching to attack him, but retired to *Samarra*.

Therebels
quarrel a-
mongst
them-
selves.

The vast successes of *Mahomet*, drew upon him the jealousy of another powerful rebel *Yakub*, the son of *Al Leit*, who was now in possession of *Korasan*, and attacked *Mahomet* with such success, that he entirely defeated him in *Abwaz*, and made himself master of his palace, where he is said to have found four million of dirhems, amounting to near four hundred thousand of *English* money. By this great victory, *Yakub* became very formidable. He still pretended to act under the califf's authority, but after subduing *Mahomet*, he disowned it, and prepared to march against *Bagdad* itself. To accomplish this important point, he made himself master of *Wafet*; and he undoubtedly would have succeeded, had it not been for the unparalleled courage, and abilities, of *Al Mowaffek*, who now looked upon *Yakub*, as being a more powerful rebel, than even *Al Habib* himself. His first step was to make himself master of *Bagdad*, which he did with the califf himself, in his company, then put himself at the head of the best army, he could raise, and *Yakub* still approaching, both armies, came to a general action at a village called *Katub*. The

engagement

engagement was obstinate and bloody, but at last *Al Mowaffek*'s fortune prevailed; the immense army of the rebels was cut in pieces, and *Yakub* was obliged to abandon the field. The defeat however was not decisive of *Yakub*'s fortunes, for, after that, he retained a noble territory, over which his posterity reigned, under the title of the *Saffarian* princes. *Al Mowaffek* pursued him, and though he had not the good fortune to take him, he entered *Nijabur* without resistance, and delivered from his captivity, the *Thaherian* governor, who had for three years lain in prison there.

After the defeat of this formidable rebel, the troops of the califf, or at least, such of his governors and great men, who found it their interest still to act under his authority, acted with better success against *Al Habib*, whose forces they defeated twice, but *Ahmed*, who commanded for the califf, was at last over-reached by the rebel, in an ambuscade, where the whole of his troops were put to the sword, and he himself narrowly escaped the same fate. After this, Hej. 265. that is in the 265th year of the Hejra, *Al Habib* retook A.D. 877. *Waset*. from the califf's troops, and laid it in ashes, after expelling the inhabitants, and plundering it of immense treasures. This opened a very bloody campaign on both sides, and the whole province was filled, with ruin and slaughter. Notwithstanding all the calamities that were daily overwhelming the califat, yet this year, four thousand *Arab* horse, under *Abdallah* the son of *Rashid*, broke with vast impetuosity into the dominions of the *Greek* emperor, which they filled with their usual ravages. The *Greeks* however recovered themselves, and attacked the *Arabs* near the river *Badandun*, with such success that they were entirely defeated, and *Abdallah* himself, being taken prisoner was carried to *Constantinople*. *Musa* the son of *Boga*, about this time died at *Bagdad*, which proved of vast service to the califf's affairs, for *Mowaffek*, had now no rival in his military glory, and took his measures so well that he humbled the pride of the *Turkish* mercenaries, and obliged them to be subject to discipline.

But just at this crisis of good fortune for the califf, his affairs received a more terrible stroke, than any they had yet experienced. *Tolun* the son of *Ahmed*, the *Turk*, whom we have already mentioned, had for some years governed *Egypt*, with great wisdom and magnanimity, but without disowning his subordination to the califf, though in fact he was independent upon him. But at this time perhaps instigated by his countrymen at the califf's court, he not only renounced his allegiance, but assumed to himself all the powers, civil, military, and ecclesiastical, that had been exercised by the greatest califfs. His first undertaking, was to advance with a great army against *Antioch*, which was defended by one *Suria*, one of those little tyrants, who acted under the califf's authority, and had been by him nominated,

nominated, to the government of *Anticch*, *Allepo*, and other great principalities. *Suria*, for some time, made a good defence, but *Tolun*, threatening to storm the city, the inhabitants, to save themselves, surrendered it, together with *Scina*, whose head he immediately ordered to be struck off. This so intimidated the inhabitants of *Alleppo*, that they opened their gates to *Tolun* upon his approach to that city. *Damascus*, *Hems*, and *Kiniffin*, followed the fate of *Allepo*, as did *Alraka*, the favourite residence of former califfs, and one of the most beautiful places in the East, situated upon the banks of the *Euphrates*.

As *Tolun* was a man who exceeded all the other rebels in abilities, courage, and understanding, his progress gave to the califf the more sensible disquiet. He therefore ordered him to be publickly, and formally cursed in all the mosques of *Bagdad*, and the other places, who still owned his allegiance. *Tolun*, who affected to exercise all the functions of an Iman, re-echoed upon him the like curses, from the pulpits of all the mosques, that acknowledged his jurisdiction. This formidable diversion given by *Tolun* to the califf's troops, gave leisure for *Yakub* to assemble another army, as powerful as that which had been defeated by *Mowaffek*, and he approached once more at the head of it towards *Bagdad*; but died upon his march of a violent cholic in the 11th year of his reign or rather his usurpation. His death seems for that time to have put a stop to the execution of his projects; for tho' he was succeeded, by his brother *Amru*, we know of no farther progress he made at that time. *Habib*, likewise availed himself of *Tolun's* irruption, and again entering *Irak*, he took *Nomama*, and *Iarjaraya*, and exercising his usual cruelties and ravages upon the inhabitants, in the 266th year of the hejra, he took *Rambarmoz* where he found vast plunder, destroyed the stately mosque there, and after massacring some of the inhabitants, he carried the others away into captivity.

It is amazing that the califat, reduced as it then was, to very narrow limits of power and dominion, could preserve its existence against so many powerful enemies, and we must conclude, that it was chiefly owing to the abilities and management of *Al Mowaffek*. As to *Tolun* his ambition was so well supported by his capacity and power that *Mowaffek* seems to have despaired of reducing him, at that time, at least. But *Al Habib* was destitute of *Tolun's* resources. *Al Mowaffek* therefore attended by his son *Al Motadhed* (who was afterwards califf) set out against him at the head of an army, the chief strength of which lay in a body of ten thousand horse, while that of *Al Habib*, amounted to a hundred thousand men. *Mowaffek* approved himself to be, of the two, the greater general. He defeated the rebel in a great many battles, retook the towns which had been dismembered from the califat, recovered prodigious stores of plunder, and released numbers of prisoners, amongst whom, were five thousand

thousand Moslem females. *Habib* having been very successful *Mowaffek* in seizing the califf's ships, four of which, laden with provisions, had fallen into his hands the preceeding campaign; *Habib*. he had at this time a good fleet lying in the harbour of a city he himself had built, and called *Al Mabiya*, and which likewise was the ordinary place of his residence. This city was taken by *Al Mowaffek*, and he burnt all the usurper's ships that were in the harbour, and after taking out all the treasure the place contained, he demolished the fortifications. *Al Habib* by this time had collected together all his troops, to the number, according to some authors, of three thousand men, and took post in the neighbourhood of *Al Mokhtara*, which he had been at great pains to render impregnable. *Al Mowaffek*, after pillaging and demolishing *Al Mabiya*, resumed his march in pursuit of the rebels, but was opposed by several bodies of them, whom he defeated, and at last approached to *Al Mokhtara*. This seems to have taken up a good deal of time, for when *Al Mowaffek* came up with the main body of the *Zenjans* under *Habib*, he found it so advantageously posted, and the city so strong, that he was obliged to have recourse to a very unusual method of reducing it. The success of which cannot be easily accounted for, without supposing, that he had, before then, received vast reinforcements, and that he was in cavalry, infinitely superior to the enemy, whose numbers proved destructive to themselves, for instead of attacking it in form, he built opposite to it a tower, which must in some measure have commanded it; and this fort he soon improved into a city, where traders settled, and money was coined, by *Al Mowaffek*. We are not however, to suppose that all this could happen in the space of one or two years. It is probable, that by the fortress which *Al Mowaffek* built, the post that he occupied, and the superiority of his cavalry, with which he was enabled to scour the country, he occasioned such a scarcity in *Al Habib's* army, and in *Al Mokhtara* itself, as facilitated, the reduction of the place. For the rebel's troops, being unable to subsist, deserted in vast numbers, so that *Mowaffek's* approaches, against the place, being rendered practicable, he plying it so furiously, with his battering engines, that notwithstanding the brave resistance made by the inhabitants and garrison, he took it by storm; and gave his soldiers the plunder of it for about six weeks. This obliged *Al Habib*, with his remaining forces, to retire, towards *Al Mabiya*, which he took possession of again, and refortified; while *Al Mowaffek* after so severe a campaign, was forced to put his troops into winter quarters.

Al Mokhtara taken by him.

But tho' tis not taken notice of by Moslem authors, it is improbable that *Al Mowaffek*, was personally in the field, during so long a course of action, or that his victories were so compleat, as they are represented. He was no stranger to his brother's indolence and love of pleasure, and therefore

Absolute power of we

Mowaffek we may reasonably suppose that he often left his son, in the califat. *Motadhed*, to command in his absence; while he repaired to court, where he governed every thing without leaving the califf almost the shadow of power. It is uncertain whether he did not oblige his brother to exclude his own son *Iaasar*, from the succession in favour of himself, and his son *Motadhed*; but some say that regulation did not take place till after *Mowaffek*'s death, when *Al Motadhed*, obtained the same ascendancy, which his father had possessed, over the califf. Be this as it will, it is agreed by all, that *Al Mowaffek* at this time, governed the califat with unlimited authority. The califf was suffered to indulge himself, in eating, and drinking, and conversing with cheerful companions, but he was in other respects so much kept under, that we are told, when he begged three hundred dinars from his brother, he refused him. *Mowaffek* however was a person of such consummate abilities both in peace, and war, that the subjects of the califat thought themselves happy under his administration, and he did wonderful things, in retrieving the affairs of the empire.

Continuation of the war with *Al Habib*. In the 268th year of the hejra, *Al Mowaffek*, finding that *Al Habib* had recruited his losses, and had repossessed and refortified *Al Mabiya*, again took the field, and laid siege to that important fortress, which was defended with great courage by *Al Habib*. According to the Moslem authors, he proceeded in his attempt this campaign, and once more demolished, the fortifications of the place. But as he is represented to have marched four times against it in the space of four campaigns, and to have four times demolished it, circumstances utterly improbable, some allowances ought to be made to the inaccuracy of those authors. There is some reason for believing that *Al Mowaffek* this campaign entered into a negotiation, with one *Lolu*, an Egyptian, and after engaging him to take the field against *Tolun* who continued still to be in a high career of success, brought him over to the service of the califf; by which the progress of *Tolun* was stopt for some time. This fact is expressly asserted by the Moslem authors, and likewise that *Al Mowaffek* caused the public execrations against *Tolun* to be renewed this year throughout all the mosques of the califat. We ought therefore perhaps to refer the second taking and demolishing of *Al Mabiya* to the 269th year of the Hejra, Hej. 269. when a battle was fought, between *Al Mowaffek*, and *Al Habib* to the disadvantage of the former, who was wounded A.D. 882. in the breast by an arrow. He was however no sooner recovered, and his army recruited, than he again made himself master of *Al Mabiya*, and again demolished its fortifications. It appears however that *Al Habib* was still so powerful in the field, that *Al Mowaffek* could not keep his conquests. For in the 270th year of the Hejra that general

was

was obliged once more to march against *Al Mahiya*, where he demolished the usurpers magnificent palace, and sent his family prisoners to *Samarra*; we are likewise told that he put vast numbers of the inhabitants to death and that he carried others into captivity. As to *Al Habib* himself, he is said to have escaped into the province of *Alwaz*, where his great strength lay, and to which he was pursued, finally defeated, and slain by *Al Mowaffek*; who ordered his head to be carried in triumph thro' the provinces he had usurped. Whatever contemptible ideas the Moslem authors have attempted to give us of this usurper, his long successes, and the resistance he made to *Al Mowaffek* prove him to have been no ordinary man; for he held his power as sovereign for upwards of fourteen years against the utmost efforts of the califat to reduce him. The glory which *Al Mowaffek* obtained by subduing and killing him was so great, that the califf gave him the title of the protector of Mahometanism, by which he was known to the day of his death.

Al Mahiya
taken,

and *Al*
Habib de-
feated and
slain.

The extinction of *Al Habib*'s rebellion was undoubtedly of vast service to the califat, by restoring to its obedience, *Alwaz*, *Bazra*, and many of the finest provinces of the East. But still others of equal importance remained in the hands of usurpers. *Al Hasan*, who, we have already observed, had made himself sovereign of *Tabrestan*, died in quiet possession of that principality, to which his brother *Mahomet* peaceably succeeded. But a more important death happened at this time, which was that of *Tolun* the son of *Abmed*; who notwithstanding all the efforts of *Al Mowaffek*, died in full possession of glory, and of one of the finest empires in the world. At the time of his death he expressed vast sentiments of repentance, and piety. It does not appear, that *Mowaffek* attempted to interrupt his possession of the countries he had usurped; and it would seem, as if he had abandoned his conquest in *Syria*, upon condition that he retained the quiet possession of *Egypt*. The state of this great man's finances, and the magnificence of his court, as described by Moslem authors, would exceed credibility, did we not reflect that there is all the reason in the world for believing there was then an intercourse, and a commerce, between *Egypt* and the *East-Indies*; which opened to the *Egyptians* most amazing sources of wealth, not to mention the prodigious fertility of the country, and the inexhaustible numbers of its inhabitants. It is said, that he distributed every month in alms, three hundred thousand dinars. That the expences of his kitchen cost him one thousand dinars a day. That his munificence was not confined to his own country, but that he sent to *Bagdad*, while he governed *Egypt*, two millions, two hundred thousand dinars, for the use of men of learning and virtue, the sick, and the distressed, and that at the time of his death,

By which
the califat
is strength-
ened.

Death of
Al Tolun.

His great
riches,

he

and magnificence.

he had in his Exchequer the sum of ten millions of dinars in ready money. His stables contained seven thousand horses, three hundred of which were trained to war, for his own and his family's use, and eight thousand mules, and camels, and all his other magnificence was in proportion. He has been charged by some authors, with the blood he shed, but when we compare the instances alledged against him, he appears innocent, and merciful, in comparison of many of the Moslem princes, who are celebrated for their clemency. The name of the son he appointed to succeed him was *Kamarawiyah*, and his virtues justified his father's choice. He left besides him sixteen sons, and as many daughters.

War with his son *Kamarawiyah*.

It is more than probable, that *Mowaffek* hearing of *Tulun's* death, endeavoured to avail himself of it; for in the 271st year of the Hejra, *Kamarawiyah* made an irruption into Syria, where he was opposed by *Al Motaded*, *Al Mowaffek's* son. A bloody battle was fought between their two armies, in which the victory seemed to incline to the califf's troops. *Kamarawiyah*, (though with no great probability) is said by the Moslem authors, to have fled precipitately towards Egypt, but that his troops restored the fortune of the day, and intirely defeated the califf's army. This perhaps was the reason, why *Al Mowaffek*, soon after his son's return to Samarra, sent him to prison, unless we can suppose, that he had another son. Be that as it will, *Kamarawiyah* upon his return to Egypt, though he was but twenty two years of age, behaved with such prudence and moderation, that he established his empire in the affections of his subjects; and having secured his possession of it by a numerous body of loyal troops, *Mowaffek* far from disturbing him in it, seems to have been contented to leave him in quiet. But *Kamarawiyah* was resolved to be acknowledged by the califf, as an independent sovereign, and kept his arms in his hands. For, in the 275th year of the Hejra, understanding that one of the califf's generals had advanced with a considerable army towards *Damascus*: he assembled his troops, and in the 276th year, he gave them a total overthrow, and took *Al Rakka* upon the Euphrates. He at the same time made himself master of many other noble possessions and leaving them under proper governors, he returned to Egypt.

Successes of the Egyptian califf.

Death of *Mowaffek*

The distractions in other quarters of the califat, and the indolence of the califf would not suffer *Mowaffek* to march in person to check the formidable progress of *Kamarawiyah*, and in the 278th year of the Hejra, that great man died. Besides his high qualites as a statesman and a general, he is said to have been a warm and constant friend, and his memory was so much esteemed by the Moslem court, that his son *Al Motaded* succeeded him in all his power and influence there. It was probably owing to him that the califf

The succession

liff excluded his own son from the succession; and substituted settled in him in his place. his son.

The prodigious extent of the califf's empire, was such, that many revolutions happened in it that are not taken notice of in history. As we have already observed many petty princes appeared through various parts of it, and though all of them recognized the authority of the califf, yet in many places his power, in fact, was no more than nominal. Those abuses had taken rise ever since the death of the califf *Ali*, and the greatest of his successors, without their perhaps being sensible of it, were abridged of their power. Those little tyrants generally founded their pretensions either upon their descent from *Ali*, which was their most common pretext, or upon supernatural gifts, which they pretended to have received from heaven. General reflection.

A sect which had been almost imperceptibly founded by Rife and the latter, broke out about this time, but it was such a history of mixture of good sense, and enthusiasm, that we dare pro- the sect of nounce nothing about it; though some modern sects of the *Karmatians*. *Quietists* and *Quakers* in *Europe*, seem greatly to resemble it. They were called *Karmatians*, and were founded, by an obscure person called *Carmata*, who came from *Kuzestan*, and first appeared near *Cusa*. We have often observed in the course of this history, that amongst the *Moslems*, the most absurd impostors, with bold pretensions to inspiration, never were without followers. *Carmata*, or as others call him, *Faraja*, pretended at first to be a kind of an Apostle, or an iman of the family of *Mahomet*. His life was pious and strict, and by praying fifty times a day, he got a great following. If we were to hazard a conjecture, we should be apt to think that originally he had been a Christian; but it is certain, that he was well acquainted with the history of the Evangelists, for he had no sooner formed his party, than he assembled them, and chose twelve from amongst the rest to preach his faith. This solemn delegation increased his sect to such a degree, that *Al Haidam*, the governor, or sub-governor of the district where he appeared, seeing agriculture, manufactures, and country work of all-kinds, entirely at a stand, through the people's following this impostor, he ordered him to be secured. But still the evil went on, for they had been taught by their master, to say fifty prayers a day, which they punctually complied with, and thereby left themselves no time for working; as to *Faraja* himself, *Al Haidam*, found him so pestilent a fellow, that he intended to put him to death. But the meekness of his behaviour, and his inoffensive doctrine, won so much upon the minds of the people, that *Al Haidam's* own concubine, stealing the key from her master's head, delivered him out of prison; and then replaced the key so artfully, that the governor could not imagine how he had escaped, when his escape came to be known. This gave an opportunity

tunity for *Faraja*'s followers, and himself, to pretend, that he had delivered himself by his supernatural power, and it still increased the numbers of his sect, when he suddenly appeared in another province. But he soon grew so obnoxious to civil power, that he was obliged to disappear; nor do we know any thing farther about him; but that he left a prodigious sect, which, from the name of its patron and support, were called *Karmatians*.

Their principles All this happened under the califats, of *Al Rashid*, and *Al Mamun*. To do justice to those Scismatics, their principles were very compliable to civil government. They had a particular way of writing, from which some say they took their name. It was different from the Cufan character, and much more neat, by contracting the size of the characters, and leaving a large space between the lines. The *Karmatians*, far from being discouraged, or out of countenance, by the disappearance of their leader, made use of it, as an argument of his divinity, and that he was only taken from them to heaven. They pretended that the law which he left them, was a vast improvement on, and reformation of, that of the koran. They allegorized most of the gross precepts contained in that book; they were strict observers of fasting and prayer, and some of their doctrines resembled those of *Pythagoras*. They altered or abolished most of the ridiculous forms of gesticulation and praying, instituted by *Mahomet*, and pretended that their founder had left them an entire system of religion. In other respects they greatly affected to imitate the Christians. They looked upon fornication as a deadly sin; they had few or none of the scruples that the *Mahometans* were troubled with in regard to forbidden meats, but eat all indifferently. They believed in guardian angels, who protected and directed mankind in the paths of virtue and piety, and in evil angels who misled and destroyed them. They fasted twice a year and looked upon any who revealed the secrets of their religion as being highly criminal; but the most extraordinary part of their institution was, that they believed Jesus Christ to have revealed himself to one *Al Farai*, the son of *Othman*, and to have saluted him with several high appellations, and amongst others with that of the Holy Ghost. In short, upon the whole, this sect was evidently a compound of Christianity and Mohametanism, in the same manner as Mahometanism itself is of Christianity and Judaism. But, however simple or inoffensive the founder of it might have been, it was soon improved into a dangerous set of rebels, and they never were without a head who gave great disturbance to the califf's government, and who obliged every one of his followers to pay him a dinar every year. In the year we now treat of, they had come to a vast height, and had subdued many places in *Syria*, *Caldea*, *Arabia*, and *Mesopotamia*; at last, they formed themselves into a regular government under

Abu Daher, who took *Mecca* itself, and committed a great many outrages in that sanctuary of the *Moslems*. But we shall have frequent occasions, to resume the history of those rebels; who at last grew too strong for all the power in the califat.

Before we close the history of this reign we are to observe, that we meet with no acts of severity against the Christians during the whole of it. The patriarchs of *Antioch*, *Jerusalem*, and *Alexandria*, succeeded regularly, and quietly, to their several sees, over which some of them presided for twenty years, and others longer. One *Michael*, a *Greek*, in particular, was patriarch of *Alexandria* for thirty-four years. Those patriarchs still continued to live in great splendor, and when they were in good understanding with the califfs, they exercised, in some respects, even civil power, within their patriarchates, over those of their own communion. It was in this califat that, in a place of *Syria*, called the Lover's hill in that language, seven tombs, each of which contained a dead body, preserved with a wonderful freshness, and emitting a remarkable fragrancy, were discovered. The shrouds in which they were wrapt, seemed to be quite new; and one of the bodies, which was that of a beautiful young man, was so exquisitely preserved, that it seemed to breath. A stone with an inscription on it, is said to have been found near the bodies; but though the califf employed the most learned men in his kingdom upon it, they could not interpret it.

Christian
patriarchs

In the 279th year of the Hejra, the califf *Al Motamed* died at *Bagdad*. It appears as if he had fallen through intemperance, into the disease which put an end to his life; for we are told that the day before his death, he eat and drank to excess: though others say, that he died of a quinsy, at the age of fifty years and six months. This califf inherited few or none of the virtues of his family, excepting a regard for learning, and men of letters, and he appeared to have been void of their ambition. He gave himself up entirely to the pleasures of the table, gaming and music; in his person he was swarthy, but his face was handsome, and his beard long, and of a good size; but the hairs of his head were grey.

Hej. 279.
A.D. 892.
Death and
character
of *Al Mo-
tamed*.

Under this califf lived the famous *Abu Masfar*, known in after times by the name of *Al Bomasar*. He was astrologer to *Al Mowakel*; and the patronage of that great man, undoubtedly contributed much to raise his fame. He is said to have been forty-seven years of age, before he began to study astrology as a science, but he soon acquired such a knowledge in it, that unfortunately for himself, the califf *Al Mostain*, ordered him to be severely scourged for a disagreeable event, which happened exactly as he predicted. Were we to give our own opinion of *Al Bomasar*, and those of his profession it should be, that they were a set of shrewd, cunning

History of
the fa-
mous af-
trologer
*Al Buma-
sar.*

cunning impostors, who by a jargon which they called science, first got the attention of those who employed them and then by the force of secret intelligence, and undaunted assurance, ventured to foretel events, which sometime coming to pass, brought them into credit, and when they did not, they always had ready an ingenious apology for the failure. This *Al Bumasar* was the most noted impostor of that kind that perhaps ever lived. Well knowing, that true philosophy was an enemy to his profession, he persecuted *Al Hendi*, a nobleman of high rank, and a man of as solid learning as any in his time, by representing him to the people at *Bagdad*, as an enemy to religion, because he studied philosophy. As to *Al Bumasar* himself, he was a voluminous author upon astrology; and his works are held in high esteem, to this day, by the *Moslems*. He drank hard, tho' he lived to be above a hundred years of age, and had fits of the falling sickness, at a certain time of the moon, in which, no doubt, he imposed upon his admirers for inspiration; in imitation of his prophet. Being disgusted with the court, for the chastisement he had received, he retired to *Waset*, where he died. Next to *Al Kendi*, a Christian, one *Al Baalbeki* was the most learned man of this reign. He was extremely diligent in travelling through Christian countries, and in purchasing curious books, which he brought to *Syria*, or *Irak*; and many of them he translated into *Arabic*. *Senarik*, an Armenian prince, invited him to that country, and upon his death, he erected a stately monument over his body, to perpetuate to posterity, his affection for him.

*Al Motaded the sixteenth califf of the house of
Al Abbas.*

Al Motaded suc-
ceeds to
the cali-
fat.

THE lustre of the Moslem crescent had been terribly obscured during the late califats, and it was owing to *Al Motaded*, upon whose reign we are now entering, and his father the great *Al Mowafek*, that it was not totally extinguished. All connection with them and the western califfs, and those of *Spain*, was now dissolved, and they are henceforth to be looked upon, as having no kind of relation to one another. *Kamarwyah* was now in the undisturbed possession of *Egypt*, with the vast dominions left him by his father; and *Al Motaded* having succeeded to the califat in right of his predecessor's nomination, seems wisely to have applied himself and his power, to secure the quiet possession of those dominions which owned his authority. But this was no easy matter. The *Turks*, from the neighbourhood

bourhood of the Caspian sea, and from those vast countries, now known by the names of *Georgia*, *Circassia*, and *Tartary*, reaching as far as *Chine* itself, becoming by experience and success, daily more and more convinced of the weakness of the califat, flowed like a deluge over those delightful countries, that were once the pride of the *Assyrian*, the *Persian*, and the *Macedonian* monarchies, filling them with ignorance and barbarity, but under the profession of Mahometism. The *Arabs*, of whose country vast tracts may be said to have been unknown, even to the califfs themselves, had a secret attachment to the house of *Ali*, and the *Karmatians* were professed enemies to that of *Al Abbas*.

State of it.

Al Motaded, to heal those evils, upon his accession to the califat pretended, that *Ali* had appeared to him in a dream, and had engaged him to promise to be kind to his descendants. Though this was not very agreeable to the *Sunnites*, yet the prudence of the califf managed matters so well, that the kindness which he shewed to that family, (which was very great) was of vast service to his affairs.

The califf favours the family of *Ali*.

Al Motaded, when he mounted the Moslem throne, was about thirty-eight years of age; and he had a son grown to be a man. *Kamarawyah*, the califf of *Egypt* proposed a match, between *Al Motaded*'s son *Ali*, and his own daughter; and sent to *Al Motaded*'s court, a most magnificent embassy, with noble presents for that purpose. This is an indirect proof, that *Al Motaded*, or his predecessor, had, before this time, recognized the sovereignty of *Kamarawyah*; whose ambassador no sooner made the proposal, than *Al Motaded* demanded the princess, who, it seems, was a celebrated beauty, for himself. This was so extremely agreeable to *Kamarawyah*, that he could not help expressing his satisfaction with raptures, and he sent his daughter to *Bagdad*, magnificently attended, being met with vast pomp, by the califf, who espoused her with the utmost splendor. But notwithstanding this alliance, we cannot be, entirely, of opinion, that *Kamarawyah*, was absolutely independent upon the califf; for though he was so in fact, some little acknowledgment of superiority, seems still to have been reserved, by the califf of *Bagdad*, though *Kamarawyah* was at that time possessed not only of *Egypt*, but of the greatest part of *Syria*, and held his court at *Damascus*.

The califf marries the daughter of the *Egyptian* califf.

Scarcely had *Al Motaded* mounted the Moslem throne, than the affairs of his empire wore a new face, great plenty, and remarkable tranquillity appearing over it. But in the 280th year of the *Hejra*, the latter was interrupted by *Hamdan*, one of the *Arab* chiefs or *Emirs*, who had found means, by the assistance of his countrymen and the *Turks*, to erect a sovereignty for himself in the fine province of *Diyar Rabia*, and had fixed his residence at *Mawfel*. The *Curds* were now become terrible to all the princes of the East. This term was in common to *Persians*, *Turks*, *Arabs*, and

Rebellion of *Hamdan*.

Tartars, and signified no more, than certain roving clans, who lived upon plunder; but settled wherever they could do it to advantage. It does not appear, that they had the least knowledge in manufactures, excepting perhaps, in making their own arms, and far less, in learning, or the arts. *Hamdan* had taken a large body of those *Curds* into his pay, or protection, and the califf *Al Motaded*, in the 281st year of the *Hejra*, marched with a strong army, to drive him out of *Mawfel*. He was opposed by the *Curds*, and others of *Hamdan*'s forces, whom he cut in pieces, or pushed into the river *Zab*, not far from *Mawfel*; which seems to have surrendered to him. *Al Motaded* next took *Maredin*, which was defended by one of *Hamdan*'s sons, and having destroyed it, he carried his army back to *Bagdad*. By the complexion of the history of this reign, it appears as if matters had been compromised, between the califf and *Hamdan*, who was in possession of a very fine well fortified city, called *Hoseinia*, (possibly after *Hosein*, *Ali*'s son) and garrisoned by ten thousand men. For, we understand that the califf soon after became master of that place, and of *Hamdan*'s own person, but we know of no severity he inflicted upon him; so far from that, *Hosein*, *Hamdan*'s son, was appointed by the califf to be one of his generals, and another of his sons, *Abdallah*, was a general under the succeeding califf.

Supprest.

Murder of
the califf
of Egypt.

About this time, *Al Motaded*'s father-in-law, *Kamarawayah*, the sultan of *Egypt* and *Syria*, was murdered in his bed by one of his domestics, and the army obliged his son, *Iaish*, who succeeded him, to strike off his uncle's head, who it seems had been accessory to the fact. Those tragedies however, proved but a prelude to the fate of *Iaish* himself, who had not enjoyed his power, above eight months, when he and his mother were put to death by the army, who demolished his palace in *Mesr*, and raised his brother, *Harun*, who was but ten years of age, to the sovereignty of *Syria*, and *Egypt*. *Al Motaded*, notwithstanding his connection with *Harun*'s family, thought this minority a proper time for reviving his pretensions to the supremacy of *Egypt*. He therefore, very politically, wrote a letter to young *Harun*, bestowing upon him the government of *Egypt*, upon condition of being paid by way of acknowledgement or tribute, the annual sum of one million, five hundred thousand dinars, which demand *Harun*, or rather his tutors, complied with.

He is succeeded by
Harun.

Prudence
of the califf.

This accommodation seems to have restored tranquillity for some years to the califat, and it was employed by *Al Motaded* to the best of purposes, the promoting the happiness of his people; in so much that he is by some authors placed in a level with the best and most virtuous of the princes of *Al Abbas*. He seemed to be particularly careful not to exasperate the house of *Ali*, whose influence he perceived to be still very great in the califat; and even over those princes, who had erected themselves into sovereigns, out of

of the ruins of the califat, and who rendered themselves voluntary tributaries to that house. *Al Motaded*, either from principle or fear, was inclined to carry this consideration for the house of *Ali* farther than was consistent with true policy. For he proposed, that *Moawyah*, the founder of the house of *Ommiyah*, should be publicly cursed in all mosques, for his having introduced the practice of cursing the name of *Ali*, and his family. But his vizir, or first minister, *Obeidallah*, found means to persuade him from this impolitic resolution, by representing to him the dreadful consequences that might attend it, if it should encourage the house of *Ali*, already too powerful in the empire, to reunite, and revive their antient claims.

This consideration however, did not deter him from manifesting several noble acts of generosity towards that family. The prince of *Tabrestan*, who has been already mentioned, having sent by the hands of a merchant, a present of thirty thousand dinars to one of the heads of the house *Ali*, the governor of *Bagdad* laid hold of it, as a forfeiture to the government. The party that was wronged, immediately carried his complaint to the califf himself, who ordered the money to be restored, to the great scandal of the *Sonnites*, the inveterate enemy of the *Shiits*, and the family of *Ali*. But *Al Motaded* stopt their mouths, by informing them, of the infinite obligations he lay under, to *Ali* himself, who had several times appeared to him, and predicted his own and his family's future greatness; provided that the califf did justice, and shewed kindness to the descendants of that iman.

We are obliged at this period to be almost entirely directed by Moslem authors, the Christian historians scarcely mentioning the affairs of the califat at *Bagdad*, under *Al Motaded*. The Greek emperor at this time, was *Leo*, the son of *Basilus*, and notwithstanding the internal tranquillity of *Motaded's* empire, hostilities still went on upon the frontiers. The empire of the *Greeks*, as well as that of the califf, was at this juncture torn in pieces by barbarians; who now besieged *Constantinople* itself. Upon this, *Leo* ordered all the Moslem slaves, who were in or about *Constantinople*, to be armed; and they formed so considerable and brave a body, that it was thro' them, principally, the barbarians were obliged to raise the siege. When the danger was over, the emperor dispersed them through different parts of his empire, being apprehensive of the consequences, should they keep together in a body. He was however, generous enough, soon after to give them the benefit of a cartel, which he settled or renewed, with the califf, by which great numbers of *Moslems* of both sexes, recovered their liberty.

The credulity of historians have raised up in the palace of *Al Motaded*, a phantom or vision, which they say, was continually haunting him, in different shapes; in that of a merchant, a dervis, a soldier, an angel, and other appearances,

His justice
to the
house of
Ali.

Distractions of
the em-
pire of
Greece.

A phan-

pearances. Various were the conjectures which the news of this apparition raised at *Bagdad*; most people believed it to be supernatural, but they were divided, about its being a good or a bad genius; and some few had the courage to believe, that the whole story was an imposture, contrived and carried on by artful designing people. That the califf himself was of that opinion, appears pretty plainly, from his having punished, as we are told he did, several persons whom he suspected of being concerned in the imposition. Whatever may be insinuated to the contrary by Moslem authors, *Al Motaded* seems not to have been a prince, who was capable of being deceived in so gross a manner. One instance is sufficient to convince us of his good sense, in matters of government; and it is as follows.

His great
and wise
policy.

One *Sheik Kaiath*, a person of no great note, while the *Turks* domineered at the califf's court, saw one of those barbarians attempting to violate the chastity of a young woman, whose outcries brought him to her relief. But his interposition was in vain; the monster abused and maltreated him, and would have perpetrated his infamous design, had not *Sheik* mounted the place of the great mosque, from whence the people are summoned to prayers, and from thence called them together with all the force he could, so that the congregation in an instant became strong enough to deliver the poor young woman. Such a summons, when not proclaimed in the hour of prayer was deemed by the *Moslems* to be so bad a precedent, and so irregular, that *Sheik* was brought before the califf himself, who intended to punish him for the offence. *Sheik* however had the good fortune to represent the extraordinary necessity of it, so effectually, that the califf, instead of punishment, gave him thanks; together with a kind of censorial power, to call the people in the same manner, upon every instance of injury or violence offered to his subjects, and at the same time he ordered the *Turk* to receive condign punishment. This action rendered *Sheik's* reputation so respectable all over *Bagdad*, that it had a prodigious influence upon the reformation of their manners, and he was considered as the father of all who were helpless or injured: and even the greatest courtiers stood in awe of his virtue. We are told, that one of them, having borrowed a large sum of money from a merchant, the latter finding himself unable to recover it, was prepared to go upon a voyage, giving it over for lost; but was advised by a friend to lay his case before *Sheik*, which he accordingly did. *Sheik*, being fully convinced of the merchant's demand, immediately went to the courtier, and demanded, in a peremptory manner, that he should do justice to the merchant; giving him at the same time to understand, that if he should remain refractory, he knew where to obtain it: upon this, the nobleman immediately paid

paid him the money. This incident is mentioned here, to prove what influence private virtue may have, when properly supported, upon the morals of a people.

The reign of this califf, is noted for many unusual appearances in the air; for storms, tempests, rains, and inundations; all which are so common in the histories of Eastern countries, that it would be to no purpose, to recount the particulars we meet of them, in Moslem authors, were it not for a very singular effect, which those appearances produced. For one year being remarkably rainy, the astrologers of *Bagdad* foretold, that all *Mesopotamia*, and the neighbouring countries, the district of *Bagdad* alone excepted, should be laid under water; they proved, however, to be so fallible in their predictions, that those countries, instead of being laid under water, were so parched up, that they offered up public prayers, in all of the mosques of *Bagdad*, for rain.

All the care and policy of *Al Motaded*, could not insure the tranquility of his dominions. The *Karmatians*, and the rebel *Arabs*, were now become so powerful, that the califf was obliged, at a vast expence, to throw a wall round of the *Basra*, in the year of the Hejra 285. But this did not stop their progress, for being headed by one *Abu Said*, they made a dreadful irruption into the fertile province of *Barcin*, and threatened that of *Al Katif* itself. The califf, destitute of the resources his predecessors had enjoyed, and being obliged always to keep on foot numerous armies, was at that time greatly distressed for money. To raise the sums necessary for reducing the rebels, he was obliged to have recourse to private subjects, and it probably was upon this occasion, that the following remarkable incident happened.

Hearing of a person who was said to be immensely rich, the califf sent for him, told him of his necessities, "and that he would be obliged to borrow from him a sum of money." "Take," answered the generous Moslem, without hesitation, "as much as you please." The califf, struck with the greatness of this reply, demanded of the Moslem, "what security he demanded for the repayment." "Security," replied the other, "has not God entrusted you with the government of his people; have you not acquitted yourself as a wise and worthy prince of that trust, and shall I be afraid to trust you with my money, without security?" This magnanimity, and loyalty in a private person, drew tears from the eyes of the califf, and he swore, that, far from touching the man's money, should he fall into decay, all the treasures he could command should be at his service.

The califf, at last however, was enabled to raise an army with which he marched against the rebels in the 286th year of the Hejra, and laid siege to *Amida*, an important city of *Mesopotamia*, lying upon the *Tigris*, and in their hands. It

was

Instance
of justice
in the ca-
liff.

was defended by *Ahmed*, the son of *Skeik*, who appears to have been a man of great courage and experience. He defended the place so bravely, that though the califf was at the head of a numerous well appointed army, and had by his battering engines, made a practicable breach in the walls, yet rather than venture upon a storm, he received the place by capitulation, and not only granted *Ahmed* his life, but carried him to *Bagdad*, and treated him with marks of high favour and distinction.

Progress
of the
Karma-
tian rebels

The reduction of *Amida* was followed by that of *Kinriffin*, and of *Al Awafem*, under the califf's power. But while *Al Motaded* was thus opposing the progress of rebellion in one part of his dominions, it was gaining ground in another. The Karmatians, like other enthusiasts, forgot the moderation of their original principles, and were guilty of the greatest barbarities. In *Yamama*, they were headed by *Abu Said*, who seems to have been unable, to check their barbarities and cruelties; and in other respects, to have been a man of moderation, and wisdom. While the califf was employed against *Amida*, *Abu Said* laid siege to *Hajr*, a place of vast strength, in *Yamama*; but being ill provided, for an attempt of that kind, he was obliged to abandon the siege, and to form that of *Al Ahfa*, a town of the same district, about two miles distant from *Hajr*. Being likewise baffled here, his troops laid waste, the neighbouring country; and being recruited, he again attempted the siege of *Hajr*, but with the same ill success as before. The rebels however, being masters of all the open country, spread an inexpressible desolation wherever they came; and though it was then late in the year, yet the califf was obliged to march towards *Yamama*; that he might, if possible, check their progress. but finding that the new conquests he had made, required more troops to guard them than he could spare, he appointed *Harun*, the young califf of *Egypt*, to be his perpetual governor, of *Awafem*, and *Kinriffin*; on consideration of forty-five thousand dinars, which the califf, and his successors received annually from *Harun*, and the califfs of *Egypt*.

Defeat of
the califf's
arms.

The next year proved remarkably unfortunate to the califf's arms, under *Abbas*, the son of *Omar*; whom he employed to take the field against *Abu Said*; who now continued his ravages, all over *Arabia* and *Irak*. A battle ensuing between those two generals, *Abbas* received a total defeat; and he himself, with seven hundred of his men, were taken prisoners. The reason why so few prisoners were made, in so general an engagement was, because most of the *Karmatians* refused to give quarter to the califf's troops. The victorious rebel made no inhuman use of his success, but calling for *Abbas*, he gave him his liberty, upon his promising, to endeavour to inspire his master with pacific sentiments.

iments. At the same time, he gave to *Al Abbas* a description of the *Karmatians*, whom he represented to be far superior to the califf's troops in bearing the fatigues of the field; and he told him that from that time, they were determined to give no quarter to any of *Al Motaded's* forces. *Abbas* performed his undertaking; and the califf was so touched with his representation, that for one campaign, he did not attempt to subdue the rebels. This was perhaps as much owing to inability, as to moderation; for *Abu Said*, after defeating *Abbas*, again laid siege to *Hajr*; and pressed it so close, that he reduced the garrison to feed upon dogs and unclean creatures; 'till they were starved into a surrender, and all the garrison and inhabitants, who survived, were slaughtered, by the *Karmatians*, who abandoned the city after plundering it. The plague, that same year, made as great ravages as the rebels did. For we are told, that, in the province of *Abherbijan*, the living were not sufficient to bury the dead, so that they were left exposed upon the streets, and highways; and, as if all these calamities had been insufficient to compleat the destruction of the now feeble califat, the *Greeks* made a fresh irruption into it, and carried off fifteen thousand *Moslems* into captivity.

A great plague.

The califf in the year of the Hejra 289, re-assembled his troops, whom he marched against the *Karmatian* army, that was encamped near *Cufa*. The spirit of those rebels may be easily conceived, by that of one of their leaders, who on this occasion was surprized upon his post, and carried prisoner before the califf. The first question that *Al Motaded* asked him, was, whether he and his sect believed, that the Spirit of God resided in him. "If it does," replied the *Karmatian* surlily, "can that injure you? But if the spirit of the devil is in us, can that avail you, mind thy own affairs, and concern not thyself with ours." The califf then pressed the officer to declare his opinion concerning his own right to the califat. He replied with great spirit, "That though *Al Abbas*, the founder of his family, was alive at the time of the Prophet's death, neither *Mahomet*, nor any of his companions, had ever thought of him as his successor, and that *Abu Beker* was unanimously chosen. *Al Abbas* continued the *Karmatian*, was not even one of the six, whom *Omar* named, as candidates to succeed him: then if the founder of your family, was excluded by the Prophet and his companions, from that high dignity, what right, sir, can you have to it." This stinging answer, provoked the califf so much, that he ordered the executioner to put the *Karmatian* to a most excruciating death, by disjointing his bones, and cutting off his hands and feet, and then his head.

Resolution of a Karmatian.

The sentiments of this *Karmatian* seems to have been those of the greatest part of the califat, at this time; nor could all the virtues and the prudence of *Al Motaded* re-

The state of the califat.

cover

cover the authority and the power that had departed from it. The truth is, the constitution of the califat itself, was, politically speaking, no better than a rope of sand, when a man of virtue or abilities, or both, was not at it's head. Many such califfs had appeared amongst them, who, by uniting the characters of priest, and prince, and discharging the characters of both, had reared the califat to the amazing height it arose to; and had their successors been equal to them, their empire, to all appearance, must have been universal. But the *Moslems*, judging by appearances, did not think, that effeminate weak princes were fit to be emperors; or cruel dissolute men to be imans: and the house of *Al Abbas*, having got by conquest all they enjoyed, the *Shiit*, the *Karmatian*, the *Egyptian*, the *Tabrestan*, and other princes, endeavoured to erect sovereignties upon the same principle. And yet, under all disadvantages, the califf was still a powerful prince. He possessed a noble territory; and all, but the professed *Shiits*, and their friends, still considered the califf of *Bagdad*, as being the true iman, when he acted up to that character.

Hej. 289.
A.D. 901.
Death and
character
of *Al Motaded*.

Such was the state of the califat of *Bagdad* at the time of *Al Motaded's* death, which happened in the 289th year of the Hejra, in the 10th year of his reign, and about the 48th of his age. In his person he was middle sized, meagre and swarthy, and beginning to grow grey, he died his beard black; but his face upon the whole, was comely. His constitution was extremely strong and robust; and it is said, that the immoderate pleasure which he took in his seraglio, occasioned his death. As to his intellectual and political accomplishments, the readers may perceive by many passages of his reign, that he would have recovered the affairs of the califat, had they been retrieveable. As it was, he and his father did wonders, considering the thralldom which the *Turkish* mercenaries had brought upon it, and the convulsions it suffered by rebellions and insurrections. But that enthusiasm, which had originally established the califat, was now turned against it. It is here proper to observe, that all the califfs since the days of *Othman*, affected some right of descent, as well as of recognition and conquest. The first califf, after *Mahomet*, was plainly elected; but in that election regard was had to what was conceived to be the sense of the Prophet. *Omar* and *Othman* succeeded, by right rather of recommendation, than nomination, and an election was found to be absolutely necessary to give them sovereignty. *Ali* likewise succeeded by election, but he secretly despised that right, and all his house always pretended the right of blood, as being lineally descended from the Prophet. The house of *Ommuiyah*, though they rose by conquest, pleaded a family right to reign over the *Arabs*, which descended to them from their ancestors, even before the days of *Mahomet*, and the house of *Al Abbas* contended, that

that their title was preferable to that of *Ali*, because they were the elder branch of the *Hesham* family. As to the several modes of succession amongst the califfs of the same house, they were plainly founded upon nomination and recognition, sometimes by faction, and sometimes through affection; and *Al Motaded* himself, before his death, nominated his son to be his successor, and had him recognized as such.

Though *Al Motaded* was remarkable for the mildness and His severity moderation of his government, yet we are informed, that he knew at times how to act with dignity, and even with occasions. severity. One trifling incident happened to him, which would not deserve mention here, did it not tend indirectly to shew, to what a pitch of pride and cruelty, the califfs who preceeded him, had arisen. For a page, in driving away the flies, having touched the califf's cap with his fan, so that it fell from his head, upon the califf's pardoning the boy, his vizir, who was present, could not help prostrating himself before him on the ground, and calling out, in a rapture of admiration, "O commander of the faithful, can there be so much clemency in so powerful a sovereign."

It would be unpardonable to close the history of this prince's reign, without taking notice, that he joined some of the failings of his family to its virtues. He enjoyed learned men, as his friends and companions; and gave them more of his confidence, than he did even his ministers of state. Amongst those learned men, was one *Ahmed*, the son of *Mahomet*, who had been *Al Motaded*'s preceptor, and continued to enjoy the first place in his esteem and affection, 'till having betrayed a secret he entrusted him with, he ordered him to be put to death. But with this passion for learning, he had the weakness to believe in judicial astrology; and one *Sorah*, a *Turk*, served him in the capacity of astrologer. His failings.

Al Moctafi the seventeenth califf of the house of Al Abbas.

AS the vizir was the first officer of state, upon *Al Motaded*'s decease, *Kasem*, who held that high post under him, immediately gave intelligence of it to *Al Moctafi*, who was then at *Al Rakka*, and in the mean while, ordered him to be proclaimed califf at *Bagdad*. *Al Moctafi*, lost no time in getting himself recognized by his army, and formally inaugurated at *Bagdad*. He scarcely was settled on the throne, *Al Moctafi* proclaimed and recognized califf.

Death of
Badar.

throne, when his vizir *Al Kasem*, who in the late reign, had entered into some cabals to set *Al Moctafi* aside from the succession, to which, only one *Badar* was privy, fearing to be betrayed by him, inspired the califf with a jealousy of *Badar*'s designs, who was then residing at *Irak*, and prevailed with him to send an army against him. *Badar*, as if conscious of no ill intention, stood only upon the defensive, but finding that the califf had found means to gain over the troops he had with him, he retired to *Wajet*, where *Al Kasem* prevailed upon him, by a promise of pardon, which he sent to him by *Al Harem*, the chief judge of the califat, to lay down his arms before he was attacked by the califf, who was in motion against him. *Badar* complied, but *Al Kasem* ordered his head to be struck off, as he was coming to *Bagdad*, to which *Al Moctafi*, immediately returned. Though we have given this incident as related by the Moslem authors, yet, we cannot help thinking that many circumstances in it are improbable. *Al Kasem*, by the best accounts, was grandfather to *Al Moctafi*, and therefore we can scarcely suppose, that he would cabal against the succession, and however treacherous he might have been towards *Badar*, there is great room for believing, that the latter intended to rebel, or set up for himself; as so many other generals and governors had done of late.

The *Karmatians*
renew
their re-
bellion.

The *Karmatians*, still continued to gather strength, and at the time of *Al Moctafi*'s accession, their chief leader was one *Yahya*. Those enthusiasts were now formidable, not only to the califf of *Bagdad*, but to *Harun* the califf of *Egypt*. *Al Moctafi* at first employed against him one *Shakr*, a *Deylami* general, whom they routed, and killed, at *Rusufa*. They then plundered that city and its neighbourhood, and after burning the great mosque there, they marched into the prefecture of *Syria*, where *Harun*'s general, *Tai*, opposed them at the head of an army, but was defeated; and the *Karmatians* then laid siege to *Damascus* itself. Upon this, *Harun* ordered another of his generals, *Beder*, to join his forces with the remains of the army under *Tai*, and to attempt to raise the siege. This produced a bloody battle, which ended in the entire defeat and death of *Yahya*; and the *Syrians*, after putting vast numbers of his followers to the sword, even made themselves masters of his camp.

Their
cruelties.

The *Karmatians*, who now acted rather like fiends than human beings, seemed to acquire new spirits by this defeat. They chose for their leader *Al Hosein*, *Yahya*'s brother, a youth of 22 years of age, who distinguished himself equally, by his courage and his brutality. Far from abandoning their designs, the *Karmatians* under *Al Hosein*, after taking the important city of *Hems*, and receiving great reinforcements, returned to the siege of *Damascus*, and would have taken that capital had they not been persuaded, by a large sum of money, sent to them by the inhabitants, to with-
draw.

draw and to return to *Hems*. They next took *Hamah*, and *Maara*, two cities, each within two days journey of *Kinrissin*, and then they seized upon the famous *Baalbec*, and spared very few of the inhabitants wherever they conquered, or carried their arms. Meeting with an opposition at *Salamiyah*, a place of vast strength in the district of *Hems*, *Al Hosein* received it upon capitulation; which stipulated all manner of security to the lives and effects of the inhabitants, but the moment he entered the place, in defiance of the capitulation, he massacred every living creature in it, of the brute, as well as of the human, species. He proceeded with equal cruelty, and ravages, throughout almost all chery. the open country of *Syria*; and put the inhabitants, wherever he found them to the sword.

It would have been impossible for *Hosein* to have inspired Pretensions his soldiers with such diabolical fury, had he not pretended ones of an extraordinary commission from God, as being lineally *Hosein* descended from *Al Sadik* the Just, whom the *Moslems* hold their leader. in the utmost veneration, as being the sixth iman. This der. pretence of descent, whether true or false, with enthusiasts sanctified all the inhumanities he was guilty of. But *Al Hosein* had under him several excellent officers, particularly one *Motawek*; for in the year of the Hejra 290, the califf sent one of his generals *Al Az*, with ten thousand men, against a body of the *Karmatians*, commanded by *Motawek*. The califf's troops coming up with them, immediately threw off their garments, that they might charge the rebels with the greater fury. *Motawek* however, remained master of the field, and *Al Az*, after loosing the greatest part of his army, was obliged to retreat to *Aleppo*, where he was shut up and besieged by *Motawek*. As those rebels were seldom Defeat the equal to a siege of any difficulty, *Al Az* made so good a de- califf's fence, that he obliged *Motawek* to abandon that of *Aleppo*, troops. and he returned to his usual ravages in the open country; where he defeated several parties of the califf's troops.

Al Moctafi, who seems to have been inferior to none of his Troubles predecessors, either in courage or conduct, would soon have of the cal- subdued the *Karmatians*, had they been the only enemies he lifat. had to deal with; but both the *Turks* and the *Greeks*, taking advantage of the domestic distractions of the califat, invaded it about the same time. The *Turks* had, ever since the days of *Mowafek*, grandfather to the present califf, dwindled in power and credit, at the Moslem court; where some of them however still continued to serve, but not in formidable numbers. Being no strangers to the reduction of the califat's power, they now entered it by the way of *Mawaralnar*, with an almost innumerable army, commanded by no fewer than seven hundred general and field officers. The califf which is however, attacked them so opportunely, with a regular, invaded well appointed army, that he defeated and drove them back, by the with an incredible slaughter. His troops were equally suc- *Turks*. cessful against the *Greeks*, who about the same time, invaded the

They are
defeated.
Invasion
of the
Greeks.

the Moslem territories with one hundred thousand men. But though they were commanded by *Himerius*, and *Andronicus*, generals of great experience, yet they were obliged to retire out of the califat; without doing any thing of note. According to the *Greek* historians, a difference arose between those two generals, by means of one *Samonas*, a treacherous favourite with the emperor. But there is great reason to believe the *Moslems* mentioned on this occasion, were those of *Africa* and *Sicily*, and not *Bagdad*, because the difference, which is said to have arisen between *Himerius*, and *Andronicus*, did not, according to them, happen before the year 887.

The Kar-
matians
entirely
defeated.

Be that as it will, *Al Moctafi*, being now at leisure, to chastize the brutal *Karmatians*, formed against them an army of one hundred thousand men, and put himself at their head. The desolation which *Al Hosein* had by this time spread over all *Syria*, was most deplorable, and the contributions he had levied, were immense. At last, the califf having advanced as far as *Al Rakka*, gave the command of the van of his army to *Mahomet* the son of *Solyman*; and tho' the rebels endeavoured first to retire, yet they were forced to a general battle at a place called *Tamna*, where they were entirely defeated by the califf, whose victory cost him very little. It appears upon this occasion, as if little or no quarter had been given, for besides *Hosein* himself, no more than three hundred and sixty of the *Karmatians* were taken prisoners, and all of them (*Hosein* amongst the rest) had their hands, feet, and heads cut off, at *Bagdad*, by order of the califf, who entered that capital at the head of his troops, in formal triumph.

Policy of
the califf,

with re-
gard to
Egypt.

The glorious suppression of this rebellion, under *Al Hosein*, the defeat of the *Turks*, and some important advantages gained about the same time by the *Moslems* over the *Greeks*, revived the lustre of the califat. Were we to hazard a conjecture on this occasion, it would be, that *Al Moctafi* was not near so forward as he might have been, in suppressing *Hosein's* rebellion, because it chiefly tended to weaken *Harun*. It is plain, that *Moctafi* looked upon the power of the house of *Tolun*, in *Syria* and *Egypt*, as no better than a fortunate usurpation, notwithstanding the sanction it received from his own, and his father's, forced consent. *Harun* had lost the best of his troops, in his wars with the *Karmatians*; and *Al Moctafi* resolved to treat them both equally, as rebels. With this view, he put *Mahomet* the son of *Solyman*, his best general, at the head of his army, and sent him to recover *Syria*, and *Egypt*, to the obedience of the califat; at the same time he sent a fleet under one *Damianus*, a *Greek*, to make a descent upon the sea coasts of *Egypt*.

The Kar-
matians
rise again.

Notwithstanding the total defeat which *Al Hosein* had received, the *Karmatians* continued still to keep the field in detached

detached bodies; some of which were very considerable: The strongest of those parties was commanded by one *Al Najem*, whom *Mahomet* defeated near *Hems*; and having taken him prisoner, with seven hundred of his men, he sent them all under a guard to the califf at *Al Rakka*; and by his command all of them were put to death; and their bodies exposed upon gibbets at *Bagdad*; their general *Najem*, having been tortured before he was beheaded. This victory put *Mahomet* in possession of *Hems*; and making it now no secret of the real intent of his expedition, he marched directly to *Damascus*; which being in no condition to resist a powerful well appointed army, was put into his hands, by *Harun's* governor there, who very possibly expected no such visit. *Mahomet*, after this conquest, that he might not give *Harun* time to recover his consternation, marched with great rapidity through *Palestine*. *Harun* made preparations for resisting the storm that was now ready to burst upon him, and getting his army together, he marched to fight *Mahomet*, upon the frontiers of his dominions; and waited for him at a place called *Abbasia*. It is hard to say, what the event might have been, as *Mahomet's* troops must have been harrassed, by so long a march, had not *Al Harun's* courage been baffled by unforeseen events. *Damianus*, the califf's Greek admiral, landed a strong body of land-forces in *Egypt*, and, at a place called *Tannuah*, they defeated a numerous party of *Harun's* army, while *Mahomet* was advancing on the other side with great rapidity.

The califf
invades E-
gypt.

Harun had an uncle, one *Shaiban*, who had long meditated the deposition and death of his nephew, and laid hold of this juncture for gratifying his ambition. He accordingly murdered *Harun*, and assumed to himself the sovereignty of *Egypt*. But the assassination of *Harun* met with so much detestation from the army, that they invited *Mahomet* to dethrone the usurper, promising, at the same time, to recognize the authority of the califf, if he was in a condition to protect them. *Mahomet*, willing to improve an opportunity so favourable for his own and his master's interests, gave them the strongest assurances of protection; and entering *Egypt*, he marched with his army to *Al Rayab*, near *Mesr*, the capital, where even *Sheiban*, and the rest of the *Tolun* family submitted to the califf, upon receiving from *Mahomet* full pardon, and indemnity for their lives and effects. *Egypt*, as we have already seen, had grown immensely rich, under the *Tolun* family. The califf of *Bagdad* had great occasions for money, and *Mahomet*, his general, was covetous. He therefore ordered all the great officers, and secretaries, who had been about *Harun's* court, to repair with their effects to *Bagdad*; and he imposed a kind of tax upon those who enjoyed the califf's protection, which raised one million of dinars, besides one million more, which he exacted of the provinces. He then applied himself to regulate

That ca-
liff assassi-
nated.

Egypt re-
covered to
the califat.

the affairs of his new acquisition; and after staying six months in *Egypt*, he returned to *Irak*, leaving one *Isa* to govern in his room.

The califf's general imprisoned.

Rebellion of *Kalij*.

and the *Karmatians*.

Hej. 293.
A.D. 905.

This sum of two million of dinars, raised from so opulent a country as *Egypt* was but inconsiderable; and *Al Moctafi* thought it so. He therefore gave orders, for inquiring into his general's conduct, and finding that he had been guilty of great peculations, he threw him, loaded with irons, into prison: and obliged him to refund his iniquitous wealth. The removal of so great a man encouraged *Al Kalij*, a *Syrian* general, who had served under *Harun*, to declare against the califf, and drawing together an army, he prepared to invade *Egypt*. *Isa*, and his general *Al Maderani*, drawing together the califf's army there, marched to oppose him, upon the frontiers of that kingdom. But the number of *Al Kalij*'s troops, was said to be so formidable, that the califf's generals and their army, were seized with a panic; and fled with the utmost precipitation, first to *Al Fostat*, and then to *Al Tiza*, burning down bridges, and doing every thing that could secure their retreat from *Al Kalij*. This panic every day increasing, *Kalij*, made himself master of *Mesri*, and the people of *Fostat*, and the adjacent countries, having no manner of protection from *Isa*, or their government, whose fears drove them from place to place, they submitted to the rebels, who remained, for eight months, in peaceable possession of the capital of *Egypt*. At the expiration of that time, *Al Moctafi* had leisure to send against him an army, under his freedman *Fatec*, and one *Jamami*; who entirely defeated *Al Kalij*, and he was taken and sent prisoner to *Bagdad*, together with a great number of his principal officers. After this, *Fatec* having made a triumphant entry in *Al Fostat*, was recalled, and *Isa* was restored to the government of *Egypt*. The restoring him, after the cowardice and mismanagement he had been guilty of, seems to indicate, that this califf regarded in the governors of his provinces, fidelity, and obsequiousness, rather than great abilities or great courage, which had so often proved fatal to his family.

Notwithstanding all the dreadful blows the *Karmatians* had received, we find them, in the 293d year of the Hejra, as powerful as ever, under one *Zakruna*, a bold successful rebel. Under him, they seized the cities of *Adrat*, and *Basra*, destroying the inhabitants, and pillaging the country. They then put to death, *Saleh*, the califf's governor of *Damascus*, and laid siege to that city, but through the valour of the garrison they were repulsed, and obliged to raise it, and retired towards *Tiberias*, where they were defeated by *Yusef*, one of the califf's generals, who pursued the rebels to *Al Sawan*, in the desert. This flight however, seems to have been intended as a decoy to *Yusef*, for the rebels, having recruited their army, faced about, and not only gave *Yusef* a total

total defeat, but took his camp, at a place called *Sabeen*, near *Kadesia*, in the *Babylonian Irak*. This misfortune was the more sensibly felt by the califf, as the *Greeks*, about the same time, had invaded the califat, and taken *Cyrrhus*, where they burnt the great mosque, put numbers of the inhabitants to death, and carried the rest into captivity.

General reflections

It may be here proper to observe, that the numerous relations, of massacres, defeats, burnings, and devastations of all kinds, which occur in this history, would be as incredible, as they are disagreeable, did we not reflect, that the countries where they happened were the richest, and most populous, of any in the world. Besides that opulence, and populousness, that they had from nature, they had been improved with all the advantages which a long succession of the most powerful princes that ever sat upon a throne, could procure for them, from the most distant parts of their dominions which, as has been already observed, reached even to some parts of what is now known by the name of the *East-Indies*. *Europe*, excepting that part of it which was held by the *African*, and *Spanish Moslems*, was, at this time, over run with barbarism, ignorance, and superstition; and even the courts of its greatest princes were strangers to what are now reckoned the comforts and conveniencies of life. The califfs, on the other hand, and their subjects of all ranks, lived in a splendour which the greatest *European* princes had no idea of, and they were accustomed to luxuries, which *Europe* could not afford. Upon the whole, therefore, the frequent slaughters, or ravages, mentioned in this history, appear the less incredible, when we reflect, that they happened in countries which afforded inexhaustable mines of men, money, and wealth, of every kind. On the other hand, they who committed them were enthusiasts; many of them drawn from the most barbarous countries, the deserts of *Ethiopia*, *Nigrita*, *Arabia*, and *Persia*, and all of them moulded to the wishes and ambition of their leaders, whom they were taught to look upon, as prophets, and partakers of divinity: in short, they had nothing human about them but the form, and the failings, of mankind.

The success of the *Karmatians* against *Yusef*, emboldened them, in the 294th year of the *Hejra*, to attack one of those great caravans, which yearly carry pilgrims to *Mecca*. They did this with so much cruelty, that, besides plundering the caravan, they put to death 20,000 of the pilgrims. The califf, upon this, ordered *Wafif*, one of his generals, to march against them with a large army, which he did so effectually, that he gave them the severest blow they had ever received: *Zakruna* himself, dying of wounds five days after, his wife, domestics, and a great number of his followers, were taken prisoners, and sent to *Bagdad*; where all of them, by the califf's command, expired under torments. The *Karmatians* suffered so much by this blow, that they

Progress of the *Karmatians*.

They are suppressed.

were unable, for several years, to give any further disturbance to the califat.

Death and character of the califf. The recovery of *Syria*, and *Egypt*, by *Al Moctafi*, his subduing the *Karmatians* and his repelling the *Turks*, rendered him a powerful prince, tho' he was far inferior in power to many of his predecessors. But he was a young man; he was master of immense treasures, and had very great armies; and had he lived, he might still have made further progress, in reannexing other countries to his empire; all his schemes, however, were destroyed by his death; which happened in about the 32d year of his age, and in the seventh year of his reign. In his person he was a little man, but very handsome, and had large eyes. To say that he was of the house of *Al Abbas*, is saying that he was the patron of learning, and learned men. By nature he was munificent, and notwithstanding the many executions which happened in his reign, merciful. He seems to have understood the true genius of his people and government, and to have known how to humble his great men; by which he avoided many inconveniencies his predecessors were liable to.

Al Moktader, eighteenth califf of the house of Al Abbas.

He is succeeded by his brother, who is deposed and reenthroned. **T**HIS califf was brother to the preceeding, and was, at the time of his accession to the califat, no more than fourteen years of age. He was therefore, in a manner, under the tuition, of *Al Abbas*, and *Fatec*, the freedman; his father's favourites. But they, not having the authority of a califf, were soon put to death by the troops, who in a mutiny not only deposed the young califf, but advanced to the crown *Abdallah*, the son of the califf *Al Motaz*, who took the name of *Al Mortadi*. This prince was then about fifty years of age, but many of his capricious troops not finding him for their purpose, deserted him, and returned to their allegiance under *Al Moktadi*, who, young as he was, drove *Al Mortadi* from his throne after a short reign of twenty four hours, into the desert. The usurper being discovered there, was, with his vizir, and another friend, brought prisoner to the court of the young califf, who ordered them all three to be strangled; but had the policy, to give out, that *Al Mortadi's* death was natural. His reason for this was, because he knew that *Al Mortadi* was vastly beloved for his even, philosophical, turn of mind, and in high esteem for his poetical compositions. *Al Hosein*, the son of the famous *Hamdan* was the spring of those revolutions, and

and of the disorders that then reigned at *Bagdad*; but as he was too powerful to be punished, the young califf had the address to make him his friend; and investing him with a magnificent robe, he made him governor of *Komen*, and *Kashan*. This year, which was the 29th of the *Hejra*, was remarkable for a prodigious fall of snow, which, at *Bagdad*, and its neighbourhood, was four feet deep, and a most intense frost following it, the palm trees, and vegetables, in that district, were mostly destroyed.

A great revolution, which is connected with our history, happened at this time in *Africa*. The califfs, of the house of *Aglab*, had, for many years, reigned there, under the title of the califfs of *Kairwan*, with great pomp and splendour. They had given kings to *Spain*, princes to *Sicily*, and their arms had penetrated to the very walls of *Rome*, by the help of a vast naval power, they had acquired. In short, was it not foreign to our history, we could show, that the western *Moslems* were, at times, masters of the finest kingdoms and provinces in *Europe*. A powerful pretender, descended from the house of *Ali*, at this time, disputed the califat of *Kairwan*, with *Nasser*, the califf, of the house of *Aglab*. The name of this pretender, was *Obeidallah*, and that of his general, was, *Abdallah*, and he drove the *Aglab* califf into *Egypt*; where he died at *Al Ramla*, leaving *Obeidallah*, in peaceable possession of the *Kairwan* califat. This prince founded the dynasty of the *Fatimites*, so called from *Fatema*, the daughter of the prophet, from whom he was descended, and on whose right he founded his sovereignty. After his elevation, he took the name of *Al Mohdi*, and so great was the veneration the western *Moslems* entertained for the memory of *Ali*, that the *Sicilians* expelled their *Aglab* governor, and declared for *Al Mohdi*, who went in person to *Sicily*; and there exercised all the powers of a despotic sovereign; but, after all, there is the greatest reason for believing, that he was an impostor, and no way related to the house of *Ali*. Soon after his accession, he put to death *Abdallah*, his general, who had placed him upon the throne. He constituted governors throughout all his califat, and exacted vast sums from all the officers and adherents of the house of *Aglab*; and at last, he openly declared his intention of annexing *Egypt* to his dominions.

History of
the *Afri-*
can califfs,

and *Al*
Mohdi.

The progress of *Al Mohdi* would not have been so rapid, had not *Al Moktader*, as he grew up, neglected the affairs of government, and abandoned himself intirely, to the guidance of women, and eunuchs. He removed his vizir *Ali*, of the family, in his room. But tho' his natural parts were very strong and good, *Al Mohdi* still continued, without interruption, to make a most alarming progress; and the *Karmatians*, who had been so much humbled in the late reign, began

Insolence
of the ca-
liff of *Bag-*
dad.

began again to gather to a head. In this year, *Damian*, the califf of *Kaiwan*'s admiral, defeated the *Greek* fleet under *Hymericus* near the Island of *Samos*, and it was with difficulty, that *Hymericus* himself escaped to *Mitylene*; but the greatest acquisition of all he made, was the friendship of the *Magrarians*, or western *Arabs*, which afterwards proved of singular service to his affairs.

Al Mohdi's
general
invades
Egypt,

In the 300th year of the *Hejra*, *Habasa Al Mohdi's* general, entered *Egypt* by the way of *Barkar*, a city of very great strength and importance, situate between *Trepoli* and *Egypt*. One of *Al Moktader's* generals was here defeated, and the place taken; and *Habasa* then pointed his march to *Alexandria* itself, which lay at no great distance. There he was opposed by another of the califf's armies, which he likewise defeated, and, without farther resistance, he became master of *Alexandria*, and after that of a *Fayum*. Soon after, *Habasa* was reinforced by a strong body of troops, under *Al Mohdi's* son, *Abul Kasem*, and the *Fatemite* califf made no doubt of being soon able to complete the conquest of *Egypt*. He was however deceived. The *Egyptians* were very averse to receive the *Fatemite* yoke, and *Al Moktader* had still a strong army in the field amounting to one hundred thousand men, commanded by *Yakin*, his governor of *Egypt*, and one *Samar*. *Habasa*, having received those reinforcements, engaged this formidable army, with prodigious courage, in the island of *Kamsin*. But though *Habasa* killed twenty thousand of the califf's troops, with the loss of no more than ten thousand of his own, yet he found himself in such a situation, that he durst not venture another engagement, and he was even obliged to abandon all the acquisitions he had made for his master in *Egypt*. This undoubtedly was occasioned by the prodigious fatigues his troops had undergone, in so long and discouraging a march over huge tracts of burning deserts; and the aversion of the inhabitants of the country to join him: He therefore decamped in the night time, but seems to have returned to the country of the *Magrarians*: though historians say, he returned home.

and is
forced to
leave it.

The *Afri-*
cans again
invade *E-*
gypt.

The 301st year of the *Hejra* seems to have passed in tranquility; but the *Karmatians* still maintained themselves under their several chiefs, in countries and fastnesses that were inaccessible to the troops of the califf; and we are told, that, that year *Abu Said*, one of their chief princes, was assassinated by one of his domestics in his bath: but was succeeded in his command by his son *Said*, who put the assassin to a most excruciating death. Next year, *Habasa* made a fresh irruption into *Egypt*, at the head of a vast army of *Magrarians*, and made himself master of *Alexandria*. *Numes*, a eunuch, but a most excellent general, then commanded for *Al Moktader* in that country; and fought a battle with *Habasa*, in which he is said to have been defeated,

and

and to have lost seven thousand men. This, however, does not appear to be strictly true, because, after the battle, *Al Moktader's* troops re-took *Alexandria*; and he himself seems to have been more in favour than ever with his master. For we are told, that he deprived *Yakem* of the government of *Egypt*, and we find him next year at the head of the califf's troops. Neither does it appear, that he was able in any shape to improve the conquests he had obtained.

The *Greek*, or as others call it, the *Roman* empire, was at Splendid this time governed by the empress *Zoe*, who acted as regent reception for the young emperor *Constantine Ducas*. The Imperial of the dominions were harrassed, at the same time, by the *Greekem-African Moslems*, who ravaged the sea coasts with their bassadors fleets; and by the *Bulgarians*, a still more formidable enemy, by the califf who penetrated into the very heart of the empire, and often alarmed *Constantanople* itself. *Zoe*, therefore, naturally threw her eyes upon the califf of *Bagdad*, as being a proper ally for her, to counterballance, at least, the power of the *African Moslems*; and about this time, sent two ambassadors, *Joannes Badenus*, and *Michael Taxaras*, to conclude an alliance with *Al Moktader*. Formal embassies, especially from the *Greek* emperor, were, at this time, but little known in the Eastern courts, and *Al Moktader* gave orders that the ambassadors should be received with the utmost magnificence that his empire could display, and indeed, if we can believe the Moslem authors who have described this reception, it was a magnificence that exceeded any thing that ever was conceived in fiction. According to them, the califf's guards, which amounted to one hundred sixty thousand men, who had their pay out of a golden purse, received the ambassadors, drawn up in the order of battle. Forty thousand white eunuchs, and thirty thousand black ones, and seven hundred chamberlains or ushers, were in the procession. The *Tigris* was covered with magnificent pleasure boats, and vessels, and no fewer than twelve thousand five hundred pieces, of inestimably valuable tapestry, worked in the most exquisite taste, twelve thousand pieces of rich silk, and five hundred pieces of brocade, were employed as hangings and ornaments for the palace. In the middle of the great hall was a tree of massy gold, which spread into eighteen large branches, on which a vast number of little birds were perched, and the tree being contrived in the nature of an organ, gave them the notes of the several birds they represented; and all this filled the *Greek* ambassadors with inexpressible admiration, and amazement.

We have thought fit to give those particulars as they have come to our hands, but the number of the califf's guards, and eunuchs, appears to be incredible; so that the reader may give it what degree of faith he pleases. But be that matter as it will, it is certain, that the reception of the am-
Treaty
conclud.

ambassadors was answerable to the importance of their commission. They had first an audience of the vizir, who treated them with vast politeness and respect, and then they were introduced to the califf, who received them sitting on his throne, in the most dazzling splendour. Besides an alliance, an immediate truce, or cessation of arms, till that could be perfected, was stipulated; and a vast number of Moslem prisoners, being then in the emperor's territories, the califf's great general, *Munes*, was sent to *Constantinople*, with one hundred and twenty thousand dinars, to redeem them, on the terms of a cartel, which was then settled. Though we have brought this transaction into the period of one year, yet it appears to have taken up the 303d, the 304th, and part of the 305th years of the Hejra.

AlHosein's
rebellion
suppressed.

About the time the *Greek* ambassadors arrived at the califf's court, *Al Hosein*, who, at the beginning of this reign, had obtained the government of *Komm* and *Kashan*, or rather that of all *Mesopotamia*, raised a rebellion in that province, defeated the califf's general, and would have proceeded against *Bagdad* itself, had he not been intercepted, and defeated, by *Munes*, the califf's general. The rebel and his son were taken prisoners by the conqueror, and sent together upon one camel, prisoners to *Bagdad*, in the most opprobrious manner. This rebellion in *Mesopotamia* encouraged the *Greeks*, about that time, to make an inroad upon the califf's territories; but this we suppose happened during the dependency of the great negotiation, between the califf and the court of *Constantinople*. We are told of another rebellion which happened the same year, under one *Melih* an *Armenian*, who committed vast devastations upon the Moslem dominions. About the same time, great revolutions happened in the court of the califf, by his placing, displacing, and replacing his vizirs and ministers, of whom we know little or nothing, but the names, which to an *English* reader, are uncouth as well as immaterial.

Inroads
upon the
califat,

The great opposition which the Fatimite califf of *Kairwan* met with from the *Greeks*, the *Sicilians* and other powers of *Europe*, seems to have given the califf of *Bagdad* a breathing time, during the years of the Hejra 305, and 306, but in the year 307, the war between the califfs of *Bagdad* and *Kairwan*, broke out with greater fury than ever. *Abul grabiaus Kasem*, the son of the latter, once more entered *Egypt*, at the head of one hundred thousand men, most of them *Magrabs* again *grabians*, and took *Alexandria*, *Al Fayum*, *Al Baknasa*, and invade *Egypt*, other places of great importance there. But those conquests, as usual, were but of short duration. The *Magrabian* troops trusted for their chief subsistence to the supplies of a fleet, which the califf of *Kairwan* had sent to the coast of *Egypt*, and which was laying off *Rosetta* there, when it was attacked by a far inferior fleet, under the command of *Thamal*, *Al Moktader's* admiral, who gave the *Africans* an entire

their defeat, and took or destroyed almost all their ships, which were in number about one hundred. As the Moslem but are court was, by this time, not unacquainted with the law of baffled nations, we perceive that upon this occasion they made a very and defeated, just distinction. For *Thamal* put to death all the *Magrabi-ans*, and the other natural born subjects of the califf, whom he took prisoners, but made the *Africans* and *Sicilians* prisoners of war. This defeat of their naval force obliged the *Magrabi-ans*, under *Abul Kasem*, to abandon *Alexandria*, where he left a garrison of no more than three hundred men, and to retire to *Al Fayum*; but still keeping the communication open with *Alexandria*; where it appears the *Magrabi-ans* had been guilty of the most cruel excesses; for if we are to believe *Entychias* a Greek historian, no fewer than two hundred thousand *Alexandrians* perished during this campaign. *Thamal* perceiving that it would be very difficult to reduce *Abul Kasem*, while the latter had *Alexandria* open to him, as a resource of provisions for his army, landed a body of troops in that city, and carried off the remaining part of the inhabitants to *Abukair*, one of the islands formed by the Nile.

Munes, the califf's general, all this time, occupied *Al Iazab*, an important post for putting a stop to the *Magrabi-ans* in *Egypt*; but we know not of any further action of consequence, 'till the 308th year of the Hejra, when *Munes* quitted his fortified post at *Al Iazab*, and attacked *Abul Kasem*, who still remained near *Al Fayum*, and gave him so total a defeat, that most of the Kairwan army were with vast slaughter. put to the sword, their baggage was taken, and all the vast booty they had made was recovered; while *Abul Kasem*, was obliged to quit *Egypt*, and to retire, with the small remnant of his army, back to *Afric*. After this *Munes* having in two months time settled the affairs of *Egypt*, and appointed *Helal* to be its governor, returned in great triumph to *Bagdad*.

We now proceed to the history of one of those extraordinary impostors, who, by the force of juggling, and by some Account of a remarkable impostor. knowledge of chymistry, occasioned much bloodshed, and commotions amongst the credulous *Moslems*. His name was *Al Allaj*. His original was so obscure, that we know little or nothing of the real place of his birth. He set out upon his mission with extraordinary appearances of sanctity, temperance and mortification. Like the Prophet, he lived some years in a cave, near *Mecca*, and when he appeared abroad, he amused his followers, who were numerous, with the various feats, so common with jugglers, of producing the appearance of fruits and flowers, in the midst of winter, and of raising from the tips of his fingers, money, with the inscription, "there is but one God," and that coin he called, "the Dirhems of Omnipotence." Those amusing performances gained him so much credit, that there was nothing too

Al Allaj
examined
tryed and
executed.

too extraordinary for his own pretensions to claim, or the credulity of his followers to swallow. It was said, that he could penetrate even into the human mind, that he knew the secret transactions of all families; that he could raise the dead from their graves, and some even went so far as to say, that he was God himself. The staunch Sonnite doctors, who never entered into the study of true philosophy, were amazed, puzzled and struck dumb, by his performances, and he begot in them a kind of a veneration on account of the austerities he practised. But the vizir, *Hamed*, who at that time governed under the califf, was a man of too great sense and penetration to be imposed upon in that manner. Perceiving that the followers of *Al Allaj*, were grown so numerous, as to be dangerous to the public peace, he ordered him to be apprehended, and brought before him. *Al Allaj* knew too much of *Hamed*, not to be sensible that he was not to be trifled with; his assurance forsook him; he denied that he had the gift of prophecy, or that he possessed any supernatural endowments, and rested the whole of his conduct upon his inoffensive life and behaviour. This defence would undoubtedly have cleared him, before the vizir, had he not put him into the hands of a kadi, zealous for the purity of the Mahometan faith, and for the character of its doctors. A book, said to be written by the unfortunate prisoner, was produced; in which it was maintained, that when a believer was disabled from going in pilgrimage to *Mecca*, he ought to give bread, clothing, and seven dirhems a piece, to thirty orphans; and upon his complying in his own house, with the practice of the ceremonies prescribed for the pilgrims at stated times, he was to be entitled to all the privileges and benefits he could have had, had he performed the pilgrimage in person. This opinion was judged to be heresy by the kadi, and consequently meriting death. It was likewise found, that he had misquoted a passage from the works of a standing doctor, an eminent pillar of the Mahometan law, and that he was so impious, at one time, to say, I am the Truth. Those blasphemies being prov'd upon him, the kadi ordered him to receive a thousand stripes, which he did without shrinking, on his hands and his feet, and then his head, to be cut off; which was accordingly done. *Al Ghazali*, an eminent Moslem author, speaking of his execution, gravely tells us, that it does more service to true religion, to put to death one such heretic, than to give life to ten other people.

Reflection upon Moslem impostors and prophets. As to *Al Allaj*, we cannot help remarking, that in most of the impostors, and pretenders of prophecy, and supernatural gifts, there was a strong tincture of Christianity, both of the practical and mysterious part: though the latter, by the Marionite Christians, and the other sects, that prevailed in the East, was reduced to mere jargon, or idolatry. Some dark knowledge however, of those mysteries, was sufficient

sufficient to set up a prophet; and we are told, that this *Al Allaj*, who was a poet, as well as a prophet, in several of his verses, mentioned or hinted at the hypostatic union. In the mean while, ambition and avarice, without doubt, strongly contributed to the propagation of such impostors, and there is no doubt to be made, that some of the supposed prophets, sometimes worked themselves into a belief, that they really were what they pretended to be. In short, we have but too many instances of the same kind, in the histories of Christianity, especially towards the beginning of this century. As to the Moslem government, true philosophy was, by this time, too well known at court, for the great men to have minded such enthusiasts. But they found there was a necessity for suppressing them, when the ground lay uncultivated, and all industry, by which alone a state can subsist, was neglected, by the lower ranks of people catching the madness, and running after their visionary leaders. It was on this account, chiefly, that the latter were persecuted; for we do not find, in many instances, of the lower sort being punished. When the heads of the leaders were taken off, those of their followers generally cooled, which was all that the government wanted.

The government of *Egypt*, as it had to his predecessors, still proved a thorn in the pillow of this califf. Having deprived *Yakin* of it, he gave it to *Abu Fanus*, who held it but five days, when *Yakin* was restored to it, and he, in a very short time, made way for *Helal*, the son of *Yezid*; who continued in it 'till the 31st year of the Hejra, when he was succeeded by *Abmed*; and then *Yakin* was once more placed at the head of that government; who continued in it 'till the end of his reign. The califf was equally jealous, as to his ministers; he exalted, and imprisoned them, and then exalted them again, as he saw cause; for we do not find that any punishment, be it ever so disgraceful, when it came from a califf, was resented by a true *Moslem*. The truth is, *Al Moktader* had, in his own family, many instances and examples, sufficient to inspire him with jealousy of his most approved governors, and ministers, and a rebellion now broke out, which in its consequences, gave the finishing blow to the power of the califat.

Abu Thaer, whose boldness, impiety, and successes, exceeded those of all his predecessors in rebellion, was brother to *Said*, the last head of the *Karmatians*, and succeeded him in his command. *Abu Thaer*, the more compleatly to fit himself for his undertaking, to all the accomplishments of a great general, joined the impudent pretensions of an enthusiast, and a prophet; or, in other words, that of being an adept in the occult sciences. Having by those means, put himself at the head of seven thousand men, he marched against the rich city of *Basra*, which he took, and thoroughly

History of
the famous
Abu Thaer
the *Kar-*
matian.
He takes
Basra.

And de-
feats a ca-
ravan.

roughly plundered, after massacring numbers of its inhabitants; and, at the same time, he burnt the mosque to the ground. For the reader is to observe, that those rebels had allegorized, and refined away most of the simple doctrines of the Mahometan faith, by pretending to much greater purity of life and conversation than all that could be expressed by external acts of devotion. Having remained at *Basra* for seventeen days, *Abu Thaer* abandoned it; and soon after way laid, a rich caravan of pilgrims, that were coming from *Bagdad* to *Mecca*. This caravan was protected by a guard, under the command of *Hija*, the califf's governor of *Mawfel*, but the guard being defeated and destroyed, *Hija*, with his remaining troops, fell into the hands of the rebels; and the booty was so great, that *Abu Thaer's* share is said to have amounted to one million of dinars, besides rich effects. *Abu Thaer* being thus loaded with plunder and prisoners, suffered most of the latter to escape; but he carried into captivity fifty women, and all the children he took: those who escaped, perished miserably of thirst and want, in the dreadful desert where they were taken.

Luxury of
the califf.

Al Moktader, instead of taking vigorous measures to suppress this dreadful rebellion, was now sunk in the pleasures of his court. He was surrounded by women, who were, in fact, his first ministers; and his mother, who was rich enough to supply all his luxury, presided in his cabinet. It was probably owing to their advice, that, about this time, he put *Ali*, his vizir, and grandson to *Farat*, together with his son, to death; and what was still more prejudicial to him, that he disgraced *Munes*, the most successful general he had. In short, the people observing their sovereign sinking into all the luxury and indolence that had brought so much ruin upon the califat, had neither the spirit nor the inclination, to act against the rebels, who thereby kept the field without controul.

Unsuccessful
embassy
from *Abu
Thaer* to
the califf;

Abu Thaer, who, as we have seen, was at the head of the rebellion, was then not nineteen years of age; and he gave a signal proof of moderation, or rather policy, uncommon to those of his age and character. For soon after his taking the caravan, he gave *Hija*, and the other chief officers, their liberty, and sent an ambassador to *Bagdad*, with instructions to propose, that the califf should give him the sovereignty, or the perpetual government of *Basra*, and *Abwaz*: on which condition, he offered to lay down his arms. The califf ought either to have endeavoured to crush the rebel, or to have complied with his demand; but he did neither: for though he rejected the proposal, yet he treated the ambassador with marks of high regard and distinction, and even invested him with a magnificent robe; such a conduct, the result at once of pride and fear, encouraged

couraged *Abu Thaer* to attack the great city of *Cufa*, once the most formidable in all the califf's dominions. He took it, and as usual, cut its inhabitants in pieces, or made them captives, and carried off all the valuable effects he found in the place; particularly silks and camels; which probably was a very seasonable booty for the rebels. But this plundering of *Cufa* must have been but superficial at this time, and indeed, the situation of the rebels was such, as seldom suffered them to stay long in one place; so that the principal inhabitants might have found means to have secreted themselves, and the best of their effects.

It appears from many passages of the history of this reign, who say that *Al Moktader* was a favourer of the Christians; and perhaps it was for that reason, why his people, who were Christians, incensed beyond measure with his indolence, were, about this time, extremely tumultuous, and outrageous against Christianity. At *Al Ramla*, *Askalon*, and *Tonis*, in *Egypt*, according to *Eutychius*, they destroyed the Christian churches; but they were afterwards rebuilt by the califf. Perhaps, the magnificence, and richness of the Christians, gave some umbrage to the *Moslems*, at the same time. For the people rose against them at *Damascus*, and destroyed the church of *St. Mary*, upon the repairs and embellishments of which, two hundred thousand dinars had been laid out, and they pillaged it of quantities of church plate and jewels, to an amazing value. They likewise plundered and pulled down other churches, monastries, and nunneries, too tedious and too immaterial to be here mentioned. This persecution, prevailed violently in *Egypt*, where *Al Moktader's* governors laid the clergy under so heavy contributions, by orders from *Abdallah*, the califf's vizir, that numbers of them fled to *Irak*, and in their own persons laid their complaints before the califf, who, not only ordered the exactions to be discontinued, but disposed his vizir, *Abdallah*, and put *Abul Abbas* into his room: but this was far from allaying the discontents of his subjects.

We are now insensibly come to the 314th year of the His wars
Hejra, when hostilities recommenced, between the *Greeks* with the
and the *Moslems*; but the manner and occasion of the rup- *Greeks*.
ture is very confusedly related by authors. According to
the *Greek* historians, who seem, on this occasion, to be the
best informed, the *Moslem* detachments had for some years
been troublesome to their countrymen, the *Greeks*, in *Ca-*
padocia. At last, *Johannes Curcuas* not only gave the in-
vaders a severe check, but besieged and took the city of *Me-*
tilene, or *Malacia*, on the borders of *Armenian Capadocia*,
and laid the neighbourhood under contribution, killing
great numbers of the inhabitants, and carrying the rest in-
to captivity. This success, together with the distractions
of the califat, seems to have encouraged the *Greek* emperor
to a vast undertaking, no less than that of the conquest of
Egypt.

who mis-
carry in
their at-
tempt to
conquer
Egypt.

Egypt. According to *Al Makin*, a Moslem historian of great credit, this expedition was to have been effected by putting a vast body of land troops on board no fewer than a thousand ships; and landing in *Egypt*, at the mouth of the *Nile*, where some Moslem guard-ships were always stationed. The *Greeks*, for their greater safety, dispatched, before their main fleet sailed, a pinnace, commanded by an officer, who had orders to take the soundings in the mouth of the *Nile*, and to prepare charts for the use of the fleet. This pinnace was discovered and taken, and the officer carried before the governor of *Egypt*, to whom he discovered all he knew concerning the invasion; and his information struck the *Egyptian* government with such terror, that they immediately applied for, and received a strong reinforcement of troops out of *Syria*; but their precaution was useless, for after the Christian frigate set sail, a storm overtook it, which wrecked above three hundred of their ships, and drowned their crews; and the remaining ships were obliged to put back. The *Moslems* seem at the same time to have had a fleet at sea, which we are told by *Zonaras*, was utterly defeated, by the *Greek* fleet, near the Island of *Lemnos*; but we are apt to think, that this must be understood of the *African Moslems*, because the fleet that was defeated, is said to have been commanded by *Leo* of *Tripoli*.

Progress
of the
*Karmati-
ans*.

Abu Thaer still kept the field, and this year *Yusef*, the califf's governor of *Haderbijan*, was employed against him; and advanced at the head of an army, as far as *Waset*, in the 315th year of the Hejra. A battle then ensued; the circumstances of which, according to *Abulfeda*, were very remarkable. *Yusef* was at the head of forty thousand men, and he was so effectually amused by *Abu Thaer*, that, thinking himself sure of success, he ordered his secretary, before hand, to draw up an account of his victory, which was to be sent to the califf. But *Abu Thaer*, surprizing him, at the head of a very small detachment, (*Abul Fader*, with little appearance of probability, says no more than eight thousand foot and seven hundred horse) gave him so total a defeat, that the greatest part of his army was cut in pieces, and he himself was taken prisoner and put to death. This victory once more opened *Abu Thaer's* way to *Cusa*, from which he carried off a greater booty than he had done before; the inhabitants, no doubt, thinking themselves under the protection of *Yusef's* army. From *Cusa*, *Abu Thaer* made dispositions for marching towards *Bagdad*, and this near approach of danger roused the califf, and his female court, from their lethargy. His mother lent him five hundred thousand dinars, which joined with three hundred thousand of his own, raised and paid a body of ten thousand horse, which was sent against *Abu Thaer*. But the califf, or rather the general, who commanded them, either not being able, or not choosing,

who take
Cusa.

to bring *Abu Thaer* to a battle, that rebel advanced to *Aubar*, within thirty miles of *Bagdad*. But *Abu Thaer*, laboured under his old inconveniency. His roving troops were unprepared for a siege, and he could attempt nothing against *Aubar*, and was therefore obliged to retire towards *Hafit*, a fortress that borders upon the desert of *Al Iazira*.

This retreat occasioned inexpressible exultation and joy, at the califf's court, where solemn thanksgivings were returned to God, as if they had obtained the most complete victory, and fifty thousand dinars were distributed in alms amongst the poor. While *Abu Thaer* came before *Hafit*, perceiving himself utterly unable to take it, he retreated in some confusion to *Hejr*, but with a prodigious booty. It is said, that in this expedition he defeated *Munes*, the califf's general; but there is some reason for questioning that fact: perhaps all the truth that is in this is, that the califf, having again employed *Munes*, he was general of the army he raised in defence of *Bagdad*, and that *Munes*, finding his interest at court to be extremely ticklish, thought it sufficient, to cover that city from the approach of the rebels; and even to bear some insults, rather than hazard his army.

Be this as it will, it is certain, that upon the retreat of *Abu Thaer* to *Hajr*, in the province of *Yamama*, the general place of his residence, the califf, and his court, held a new jubilee of thanksgiving, and gave a hundred thousand dirhems thereof additional charity to the poor. By the retreat of *Abu Thaer*, upon *Munes* being apprehensive for his own safety, now that he was less useful to the califf, refused to trust himself at court, and communicated his apprehensions to the army; by whom he was intirely beloved. He found them determined to stand by him, and then he ventured to go to court, where he paid his duty to the califf; but found every thing there under the government of women, and worthless favourites. *Abu Thaer* after recruiting himself at *Hajr*, where he built a palace, renewed his incursions upon the califat, and, attended by his usual cruelty, he took the towns of *Rababa*, and *Karkisia* in *Mesopotamia*. He then seized upon *Al Rakka*, and even made himself master of *Sangara* a city of *Mesopotamia*, said by *Ptolomy*, to be situated upon the river *Tigris*. During those distractions, *Mardawy*, the Deylamite, having destroyed his master, who had usurped *Iajan*, founded the dynasty of the *Deylamites*; who were sovereigns of the mountainous parts of *Tabrestan*, *Karzewin*, *Ray*, *Hamaden*, *Dinawar*, *Komen*, *Kashan*, with other noble cities and districts, in *Mesopotamia*. But the truth is, there is such a confusion, and blending of interests, names, and places, in the histories of all those revolutions; they were so sudden, and frequent, and so remote from the principal objects of the Moslem historians, that we can say nothing certain concerning them; nor

But retreat
from Bag-

The Kar-
matians
march to
Mesopota-
mia.

The Dey-
lamite Dy-
nasty
founded.

nor is it very material, as their descendants have been long exterminated, or the memory of their families lost in conquest.

Hej. 317.
A. D. 929
The califf
deposed,

About the 316th or 317th year of the Hejra, the government of *Al Moktader*, which had now lasted about twenty one years, grew detestable to his army; and they resolved to raise his brother *Al Kaher* to the califat. *Munes* continued still at the head of the army and consequently was master of the empire. He had great reasons to be dissatisfied with *Al Moktader*, but much greater to be so with his designed successor, whom he knew to be a monster of cruelty and avarice. The spirit of the army, however, pointed so strongly towards a revolution, that *Munes* was obliged to give way to it; nor can we have a greater instance of the insignificance of civil power, when the sword gives law to it, than what happened upon this occasion. *Munes*, who wanted rather to reform, than ruin the califf, broke, into the imperial palace, at the head of no more than twelve horse, and stripping it of six hundred thousand dinars belonging to the califf's mother, besides other valuable effects, carried off prisoners with him to his own house, the califf himself, his children, mother, wives, Concubines, and in short all his relations, and family. Upon this, *Al Kaher* was immediately recognized for califf, and proper notifications of his elevation were sent thro' all the provinces of the empire. The new califf appointed *Abu*, the son of *Moklah*, to be his vizir, and *Baruk*, the captain of his guards, and appointed his other officers of state, in the same manner as his predecessors had done; but his power was of short continuance. *Munes*, was secretly his enemy, and perhaps not the less so, as he found his name left out of the new promotions. No part of the immense treasure he had carried out of the late califf's palace, had come into the coffers of *Al Kaher*, and the army, who had promised themselves mighty matters from his elevation, in three days after, mutinied. They surrounded the imperial palace, and clamoured for their pay, and the new ministry, not being able to satisfy them, they forced the vizir to fly, and put *Bakur* to death, with several other of the califf's favourites, and restored *Al Moktader* to the Moslem throne. Upon his restoration, he pursued a very moderate conduct, by pardoning his brother, and promising ever after to be his friend; and by taking the late vizir *Abu* into his favour.

but restored
to his
throne.

His moderation.

The Kar-
matians
take, plunder and
destroy
Mecca,
with great
slaughter.

Those intestine commotions had a fatal effect upon the internal quiet and most important concerns of the califat. *Abu Thaer* again advanced towards *Bagdad*, but finding himself unable to take the city, after skirmishing with the califf's forces, he encamped near to *Fal Arkuf*, which lay so conveniently, that his detachments from thence could interrupt, and plunder all the caravans of pilgrims, going to *Mecca*, from *Bagdad*, *Mesopotamia*, and *Korasan*. He likewise,

likewise secured all the wells and springs between *Bagdad*, and *Mecca*, so as to render the journey impracticable. Perceiving, thro' the distractions of the califat, that he had no enemy to fear in the field, he set out in the beginning of *December*, at the head of his army, to *Mecca*, with an intention to plunder that holy city. We know of no resistance he met with, either in his march, or in his entering the place, where he proceeded in a manner that sufficiently proved, that his army were rather demons, than Moslems; for they left unpracticed no indignity against the faith of *Mahomet*, that could possibly be practiced. The *Kaaba*, was not only plundered but filled with dead carcases; as was its area, with those of the pilgrims who were going round it in procession: and amongst others *Al Mollahab*, the head man in *Mecca*, was massacred. The well *Zenzem*, held in such veneration by all *Mahometans*, was uncovered, its enclosure broken down, and itself polluted with dead carcases; and to compleat the sacrilege of the rebels, even the black stone of the *Kaaba*, (which with no impropriety we may call the corner stone of *Mahometinism*) became part of their plunder. A golden spout, which had been fixed by the piety of Moslem princes, to carry off the waters from the roof of the *Kaaba*, was ordered by *Abu Thaer* to be taken down, and carried off with the rest of the booty; but our authors tell us, with great satisfaction, that the fellow employed on this occasion, broke his neck in the attempt. The cruelties and ravages of the *Karmatians* were not confined to the *Kaaba*, but extended all over the city of *Mecca*, which was immensely rich. The inhabitants received no quarter, and the barbarians had even the precaution to possess all the outlets of the city with parties, who plundered and cut in pieces those who endeavoured to escape. Thus, not only the *Kaaba*, and the city, but even the high-ways, and the deserts, were filled with slaughter. The booty which the *Karmatians* made upon this occasion, was incredible; and *Abu Thaer* ordered the whole of it to be carried to his favourite residence *Hajer*. As to the famous black stone, the loss of which the *Moslems* so much lamented, the *Karmatians* treated it with infinite contempt and derision; but they refused five thousand dinars, which were offered by a zealous *Moslem* to redeem it. The reason of this was their hoping, that by detaining it, they might be able to cure their countrymen of their folly of going in pilgrimages to *Mecca*. But finding, after experience of above twenty two years, that it had not that effect, they sent it back to the *Meccans*, with a taunting message, that it was not the true stone. We are however assured, by the *Moslem* historians, that the identity of the stone was proved, by the particular property it had of not sinking in water.

Plunder and destroy that holy city.

Booty of the *Karmatians* who carry off the black stone of the *Kaaba*.

While the califat was thus distracted by rebellions and commotions, both foreign and domestic, the subjects of it at

Religious disputes

amongst
the *Mo-*
slems.

Causes of
the decay
of the
califat.

Ravages of
the *Deyla-*
mites.

Munes re-
tires from
court.

Bagdad, were daily massacring one another in idle disputes about religion. One sect amongst them, was for placing *Mahomet*, at the last day, upon the Throne of God's glory, near himself. Another sect gave him no more than the office of mediator, or intercessor, for all true *Moslems*, whom God would pardon upon his account. Those idle disputes filled the streets of *Bagdad* with assassinations and confusion. What the employment of the califf was, all this time, does not very clearly appear, only that he raised and disposed vizirs, and that he gave to *Nasero Dawla*, the government of *Amida*, and other provinces, on his consenting to pay an annual consideration in money. Those considerations, or rather tributes, were the first symptoms, if not the cause, of the ruin of the califat. The great califfs obliged their governors to account for the revenues of their provinces, and appointed receivers general to collect them. But when indolence, and incapacity, got possession of the *Moslem* throne, they gave up the provinces to be fleeced by their governors, and a certain fine to be paid annually. By this, every governor, in fact, became a sovereign, and too powerful for the califfs to oblige them even to continue the little fine they were to pay. We find that, in the 318th year of the *Hejra*, a body of troops, which the *Arabs* called, *Al Mosafia*, was broken, and expelled out of *Bagdad*. As this corps of infantry had been extremely active in restoring the califf to his throne, they had grown insolent on that account; but we may consider the reduction of it as a prologue to his fate, which followed soon after.

Next year, *Marderwij*, the prince of *Deylam*, a great warrior, took *Hamadan*, where he committed vast excesses, in suffering his soldiers to ravish the women, and to massacre the men, to the number of thirty thousand. Upon this the califf ordered *Harun*, one of his generals, to march with an army against the *Deylamite*; a battle ensued, between the cities of *Hamadan* and *Kazwin*, in which, *Harun* was totally defeated; and the *Deylamite* carried his ravages into the very heart of *Persia*, where he assaulted and took *Ispahan* itself.

The degeneracy and indolence of the califf, with the perpetual misfortunes and disgraces that had happened to the califat during his reign, became now intolerable to his subjects; and *Munes*, the eunuch, who was still in high credit with the army, retired in disgust, from *Bagdad* to *Mawfel*. Being attended with no more than eight hundred horsemen, the califf thought it would be easy to subdue him, and sent orders to a prince of the house of *Hamdan*, who was then the tributary sovereign of *Mawfel*, to seize him and send him prisoner to *Bagdad*. But *Munes*, by his credit, soon raised troops sufficient to enable him to stand his ground, and he defeated the *Hamdan* prince's army, though it consisted of thirty thousand men, near *Mawfel*.

The

The consequence of this victory was, that all the riches and possessions of the *Hamdan* family, were seized by *Munes*, and they encreased his reputation to such a degree, that the flower of the califf's armies joined him from *Egypt*, and *Syria*. Being thus strengthened, he marched directly for *Bagdad*, at the head of his troops, and encamped before the gate called *Shammasia*. The califf and his ministers were so silly as to imagine, that his character as iman, which he still retained, would be of service to him on this occasion; and he was weak enough to march out, with the few attendants and troops that were left him, with copies of the koran in his hand, and in those of his chief attendants. *Munes*, unfortunately for the califf, happened to be at *Rashtidia*, at the time this procession took place, so that the only spectators of the show were the barbarous *Magrarians*; who immediately surrounded the actors, cut off their retreat into the city, and put them all to the sword. The califf himself was run through the body by a *Magrabian*, and instantly dispatched. His body was stripped and exposed in the most indecent manner, and his head carried to *Munes*, who wept bitterly at seeing it, and ordered guards upon his palace, to prevent all kinds of insults upon his family.

marches
against the
califf;

who is
killed

Such are the most authentic accounts that have come to our hands of the califf, *Al Moktader's* death. But *Murkhond*, a *Persian* historian, who delights greatly in the marvelous, has embellished it with several romantic circumstances. According to him *Al Kaber*, the califf's brother, finding he was imprisoned, and must suffer death, for usurping the throne, entered into a conspiracy with *Munes*, and both together engaged a *Magrabian* horseman, who was famous for his address, and dexterity in arms, to assassinate the califf. The *Magrabian* watched his opportunity, while the califf was beholding, at the gate of *Samamasia*, some exhibition of feats of activity; and the *Magrabian* entering the lists with other performers, gave the califf so much delight, that he ordered his guards to fall back, that he might have the more distinct view of the *Magrabian's* activity. This is said to have given the latter an opportunity of running the califf through the body, so that he fell dead upon the spot. The *Magrabian*, upon this, went away to the prison where *Al Kaber* was confined, to deliver him, but meeting with an ass in his way, his horse took fright, and rushing into the shambles, one of the hooks on which the butchers hang their meat, caught hold of his throat, and the califf's guards coming up, set fire to a load of thorns which were on the asses back, and burned the *Magrabian* to death, while he was hanging. We have given this account of *Al Moktader's* death, though it is big with improbabilities, only because *Murkhond* is an historian greatly esteemed by some authors.

Different
account of
his death.

His cha-
racter.

Al Moktader had drawn his reign out to the unusual length of twenty-five years, and was killed in the thirty-eighth

or thirty-ninth year of his age. He seems naturally to have had good parts, but they were drowned in luxury and indolence. One of his courtesans, one *Yamec*, was in fact his first minister, though he had a great many who had the title of vizirs, and she is said to have been so great a proficient in the Moslem law, that the most learned doctors of it were directed by her opinions. Her chief merit, however, perhaps, consisted in the califf's fondness and partiality for her. This califf in his person, is said to have been of a middling stature, to have had a fair complexion, and fine eyes. By all accounts, he was very religious, and charitable, and he is said to have expended in alms the sum of seven million of dinars during his reign; but this is scarcely credible, when we reflect upon the reduced state of the califat under him. His bounty to his concubines, and favourites, was unbounded and extravagant, in the jewels, unguents, and perfumes, he bestowed upon them; and the Christian writers, for the reasons we have taken notice of in this history, have extolled him, for the virtues of moderation, and equity.

History
of three
learned
men.
Tabari.

But we cannot close the history of this reign without taking notice of three great men, in the literary way, who lived in it. The first was *Al Tabari*, an author of the Moslem history, to whom we have been greatly indebted, and who has been stiled the Levi of the *Arabs*. He is said to have been master of vast learning, and that his history, at first, was so voluminous, that he was forced to abridge it; but the abridgement, it seems, has outlived the larger work, which is now no where to be met with. *Al Tabari* died in the 310th year of the Hejra, and continued his history to near the time of his own death, which happened in the eighty-sixth year of this age. We are assured, that he was a devout admirer of the koran, and yet, that he was stigmatized as a Shiite or heretic at *Bagdad*. His work is now in vast esteem amongst the *Mahometans*, and has been translated in the *Turkish*, and other oriental languages, and has been continued down to the 521st year of the Hejra; *Al Tabari* was a native of *Tabrestan*, and took his name from that province.

Albatani. The next man of learning whom we shall mention under this reign, was *Albatani*, the great astronomer, and author of the famous *Sabian* tables, in which the fixed stars, are placed according to their situation, in the year of the Hejra 299.

And the
famous
Al Raza.

The last learned man we are to mention, is the celebrated *Al Razi*, well known to the *European* authors, and quoted under the name of *Rascs*. He was a great philosopher, as well as one of the greatest physicians that ever lived, and, with all, a worthy and charitable man. Being immoderately fond of beans, he is said, but with what propriety we shall not judge, to have contracted, by constantly eating them,

them, pearls in his eyes. When a surgeon came to cure them he would not suffer him to perform the operation, because he could not tell him of how many tunics the eye was composed. Though, at first, he was immoderately fond of music, yet he applied to the study of medicine, with such assiduity, that when he was forty years of age, he was at the top of his profession in the califf's court. His equanimity and charity, were equal to his learning and reputation. The riches he acquired by his profession were expended in acts of munificence, and in alms to the poor, whom he relieved, not only by his advice, but his purse; so that in his old age, he fell into poverty. He wrote many treatises of alchemy, or the transmutation of metals, and some in medicine, which were so highly valued by several great *European* physicians of modern times, that they have been translated, and printed, at the expence of private persons. He had the courage, in some points, to differ with *Aristotle*, and the vast reputation he acquired in learning, made the *Arabs* conclude, that he certainly knew judicial astrology so well, as to be able to predict, by the stars, future events. But one *Al Cabe* told *Rases*, upon a time, that he appeared to be ignorant of medicine, because he could not cure his own eyes, of judicial astrology, because he had not foreseen the misfortunes that were to befall him and of alchemy, because he was poor. This great physician's name is taken from the place of his birth, which was *Ray*.

Al Kaher, brother to the preceeding califf, and the nineteenth of the house of Al Abbas.

THE late califf, *Al Moktader*, left behind him a son, *Al Kaher's* but he was a minor, and therefore it was judged by *Nu-* accession
bakti, a nobleman of great interest, that he would be too to the
much under the influence of the women and favourites, califat.
from whom the empire had suffered so much during the late reign. *Munes* therefore, who was for electing the young prince, because he well knew what a monster *Al Kaher* was, gave up the point, though greatly against his own conviction. It was pretended, that the empire wanted a head that had resolution and courage sufficient to reform it; and *Al Kaher* was accordingly declared and recognized califf, *Munes* concurring in the election. The new califf's favourite was one *Balik*, to whom he gave the post of his chamberlain, or the keeper of his court. His vizir was first *Al Kasem*, and then *Mokla*. He began his reign with the most shocking acts of cruelty and avarice. After obliging his mother-in-law, *Shab*, or *Safa*, to give up all her rich effects,

His cruelty,

effects, and one hundred thousand dinars in ready money, he put her to the most indecent and exquisite tortures, tho' she was then infirm and dropfical, to oblige her to discover more, but she had the courage, amidst all her pain, to upbraid him to his face with ingratitude, as she had diverted her son, the late califf, from putting him to death. In like manner, *Al Kaber* tortured the domestics, and even the children of the late califf, to force them to confess what money they had. *Safa* soon after, died of the tortures and hardships she had endured.

Conspiracy against him discovered and defeated.

Cruelties so unprecedented in the court of a califf, soon alienated from him the best of his friends, and, his chamberlain *Balik*, *Ali* his son, the vizir *Mokla*, and others, joined with *Munes* in a conspiracy to dethrone him. But after the conspirators had possessed themselves of all the chief passes leading to the palace, the califf had intelligence of their intention, from one *Saccari*, who gained admission to him in women's cloaths, and before they could strike their blow, *Balik*, *Ali*, *Munes* and *Ahmed*, the son of *Zairac*, were themselves surprized, and their heads were cut off by the califf's order. This was effected by the dependants of a *Turk*, one *Yusef*, who was then about the califf's court. As to the vizir *Mokla*, he escaped to *Waset*, where he remained concealed.

The califf, soon after his deliverance, manifested his cruelty and ingratitude still more and more. The heads of the conspirators, though to them he owed his advancement to the califat, were ignominiously exposed through the streets of *Bagdad*. That of *Munes*, who was of a gigantic size, was very remarkable, and his brains when taken out of his scull, are said to have weighed six *Bagdad* pounds. The tyrant likewise put to death *Nubakti*, who was the first instrument of his election; and his behaviour in all other respects was so ungrateful, that the dependants of *Yusef*, who had delivered him from his late danger, mutinied against him in favour of *Ahmed*, the son of the califf *Moktasi*. But *Al Kaber*, who, in common with other tyrants, appears to have been extremely suspicious, and, consequently, vigilant, came to the knowledge of the conspiracy. He then sent for *Ahmed*, and, according to the *Persian* historian of his reign, first, confined him in the most retired place of his palace, and then ordered him to be fastened with four nails to the wall of the room, where he soon expired.

His method of getting money.

The tyrant, about this time, having a pressing occasion for money, sent for one *Yahya*, a lawyer and a judge, who was reputed to be immensely rich, and asked him for the loan of two hundred thousand dinars. *Yahya* pleaded his inability to advance so great a sum, and said, he could not do it. "Can you not?" replied the califf, *Ahmed*, who was in the next room, assured me you could, go and advise with him.

him." *Yahya*, upon this, ſtept into the room where *Ahmed* was nailed to the wall, and dead, and ſoon after returned to the califf and told him, that *Ahmed* had entirely convinced him of his duty, and immediately brought him the money; which induced the califf to continue him in his poſt, by which it is probable, he ſoon indemnified himſelf by rapine and injuſtice.

The late vizir *Mokla*, continued all this time concealed at *Waſet*. The indolence and inability of the court of *Bagdad* had now brought ſwarms of *Turks*, and other barbarians, to the very gates of the capital, where they met with no reſiſtance, and were oftentimes taken into the califf's own ſervice. In the year of the Hejra 322, *Mokla* applied himſelf to a barbarian, one *Sima*, a *Turk*, and general of the *Sajians* and *Hajarians*, then in the neighbourhood of *Bagdad* and *Waſet*. He repreſented *Al Kaber* in his true colours, as a monſter of mankind, as having deſtroyed his greateſt benefactors, and the moſt worthy perſons of his empire, after promiſing them his protection; and he more than inſinuated, that *Sima* himſelf would not unlikely ſhare in the ſame fate. This induced *Sima* to be ſo much upon his guard, that *Mokla* never conferred with him, but in diſguiſe; ſometimes like a beggar, ſometimes as a woman, and ſometimes as a blind mendicant. But *Mokla* ſtill perceiving the barbarian to be irrefolute as to the part he ſhould act, very artfully applied to *Sima*'s aſtrologer, and his interpreter of dreams, who governed the barbarian by his hopes and fears, and made each of them a preſent of two hundred dinars. This well judged bribe had the deſired effect, and *Sima* being told by them, that a violent death was portended to him unleſs he took ſuch and ſuch medicines to avert it, he entered into *Mokla*'s views, and to all the meaſures for immediately dethroning the califf. But notwithſtanding all *Mokla*'s addreſs and precaution, the califf's vizir had notice of the conſpiracy, and ſent *Salam* the chamberlain, and *Iſa*, the phyſician of the court, to apprize him of his danger. But *Al Kaber* having committed a debauch the preceeding night, was then ſo faſt a ſleep, that his attendants durſt not awake him. The conſpirators, from certain indications, ſuſpecting they were diſcovered, while he was yet aſleep, broke into the palace, and the califf ſtarting up in amazement, and creeping up to the coving of the ſtove or bagnio, he endeavoured to conceal himſelf. But the conſpirators diſcovering him, they dragged him from his hole, and drawing a red hot iron ſeveral times before his eyes, they deprived him of ſight, and then throwing him into a dungeon, like true barbarians, they plundered the city. *Al Kaber* was afterwards releaſed from his confinement, but being blind, he fell into ſuch extreme wretchedneſs, that he grew a common beggar upon the highways, and in the

Diſorders
of the ca-
lifat.

Hej. 322.

A.D. 933.

Manage-

ment of

Mokla the

late vizir,

which de-

thrones

Al Kaber,

who be-

comes a

beggar in

his extreme poverty.

His character.

mosques, making use of the form, "remember your late califf, who is now a beggar."

The reason why his life was spared, seems to have been, that he might renounce all pretensions to the califat, and acknowledge the right of his nephew *Al Radi*, the son of *Moktader*, whom the conspirators pitched upon to be his successor; and it is said, that, with great difficulty, he was the first who recognized *Al Radi*'s authority; but others say, that he never could be prevailed upon to renounce, in proper form, his pretensions to the califat. We have little or nothing to add, by way of character, to this tyrant, but that he died, when he was above fifty-two years of age. *Isa*, his physician, was the only person to whom he was constant in friendship. Another physician, one *Senan*, a man of some reputation in his profession, and an excellent astronomer, his works in both sciences being, to this day, in great esteem, had likewise some share in the confidence of this tyrant, who made him a kind of inspector, and censor, over all the physicians, in *Bagdad*; many of whom, we are told, he found to be most grossly ignorant; *Senan* being a *Sabian*, and idolater, the califf forced him to embrace Mahometanism, but he found the disposition of the tyrant so capricious and cruel, that he fled from the court to *Bagdad*, and took refuge in *Korasan*.

Al Radi, the son of the califf Al Moktader, the twentieth califf of the house of Al Abbas.

Al Radi succeeds.

Al Radi mounted the throne from a prison, to which he had been confined through the jealousy of the late califf. The reader is to observe, that the influx of the *Turks*, and other barbarians, into the califat, had, by this time, introduced an almost total alteration, not only of manners but forms. Every califf, at his accession now took a new name, and that of *Al Radi*, was changed from *Abul Abbas* to *Ahmed*. In imitation likewise of the barbarians, it had for seven or eight reigns past been customary, to add the word *Billah*, to the name of every califf, by way of a sovereign appellation. Scarcely was *Al Radi* placed upon the throne, when two candidates appeared for the post of vizir. The one was *Ali*, the son of *Isa*, and the other was *Mokla*. The former was perhaps the best qualified, but the latter, who was rather a man of craft and cunning, than abilities and wisdom, being supported by *Sima*, the *Turk*, was preferred by *Al Radi*, who soon found reason to repent of his choice.

Mokla made vizir.

The provinces of the califat were, at this time, in a state of mere anarchy, and all right of authority, and preference, over them, was decided on the point of the sword. *Mazda-wij*

wij the *Delamite*, in the late reign, had received the government of *Ray*, *Markab*, *Zanyan*, and *Abher*, upon his promising to restore to the califat the city of *Ispahan*; *Ispahan* but the accession of *Al Radi* intervening before the bargain was completed on the part of the califf, *Mazdarwij* ordered his brother *Masmakin*, immediately to repossess himself of *Ispahan*, and to seize likewise upon the districts of *Ray*, *Akwaz*, and *Fars*; while *Motahar*, the califf's governor of *Korasan*, having no more than a nominal power, was unable to oppose him. *Mazdarwij* then contracted an alliance with *Amadawla*, another *Deylamite* prince, and the founder of a dynasty, upon the terms of each keeping possession of what he had acquired; and when united, they securely bad defiance to all the remaining power of the califat. That was so small, that the *Greek* general *Joannes Curcuas*, this year is said again to have taken the city of *Galatia*, (if this incident is not confounded with what happened some years before) and to have reduced great part of the Moslem territories to the allegiance of the emperor. This year was noted for the death of *Abu Mohammed Obeidallah*, the founder of the *Faitemite* dynasty in *Africa*, or the califat of *Kairwan*, and he was succeeded by his son *Al Kayem*, who is said to have found means to conceal his father's death, for almost a whole twelve month, from the *Spanish*, *Sicilian*, and other *European Moslems*, over whom he pretended to be superior. This *Kayem*, or, as he is called by others, *Abul Kasem*, conquered *Genoa*, and *Sardinia*.

Peace amongst the usurpers.

Death of the califf of *Kerwan*.

The weakness of the califat, far from uniting the minds of its subjects, seemed only to disunite them the more. A thousand different sects, some of whom we have already taken notice of, sprung out of the *Shijtes*, or the votaries of *Ali*. But none were more numerous, than those *Sufis*, or *Quietists*, we have already mentioned, who pretended their bodies to be the habitation of God, and that they had an inward light to direct them in all their proceedings; these again were subdivided into a hundred other branches, each headed by some impostor, whose followers were strong, in proportion to the boldness and absurdity of his pretensions. One *Shalmagani*, so called from the place of his nativity, was, at this time, at the head of a sect of this kind, which, besides believing that the divinity resided in them, thought that *Ali*, was either God, or so like God, that they might be easily mistaken for one another, and that souls passed through a number of ages, from one animated body to another. This last, as has been before observed, was a remains of *Pythagorism*, and had always prevailed in the East, where it now subsists. But *Shalmagani*, went farther, for he taught his followers, in private, to worship him, as having a more than common portion of divinity residing in him. Like other impostors, notwithstanding the boldness of his pretext, he would willingly have avoided having his divinity brought to a test. He remained for some time obscure, but still

History of

Shalmagani.

still, in private, disseminating his doctrines, 'till upon the credit of the great numbers he got to embrace them, he ventured abroad; but was taken, and with his two chief disciples, *Ibrahim*, and *Mahomet*, he was carried before the vizir *Mokla*. His courage then failed him; he denied the doctrines he had taught, and imputed the belief which his followers entertained of his divinity, to their own credulity and over zeal, as he never had affected any such character. The vizir, after this express recantation, not chosing to put *Shalmagani* to death upon his own authority, sent him before the califf, where he still persisted in denying the charge against him. The califf ordered his two followers to buffet him, with their fists. *Mahomet* with vast reluctance complied; but *Ibrahim* fell upon *Shalmagani's* neck, kissed his head, and his beard, called him his lord, his support, and his God. *Shalmagani* seemed angry with *Ibrahim* for this extravagance, and renewed his protestations, that he never had encouraged any one to believe him to be a God; but the califf entertaining some suspicions on that head, ordered him to be tried before an assembly of doctors; who examined and condemned him and *Ibrahim* to death. They were accordingly crucified, and their bodies were burnt.

He is crucified.

Progress of the usurpers.

Mardawij the *Deylamite* king, towards the 323d year of the Hejra, had made such progress, that he became master of the whole of *Al Iebel*, but was soon after murdered by some *Turkish* mercenaries he had in his service; and he was succeeded by his brother *Wasmakin*. Other tyrants and usurpers sprung up at the same time, and fought amongst themselves, for the several provinces they pretended to, without the califf's offering to interfere in their disputes. *Mahomet*, the son of *Togij*, surnamed *Al Akshed*, seems to have been the most fortunate and powerful of those tyrants; for he seized both *Syria* and *Egypt*, and governed them by an independent power. *Abu Thaer*, the *Karmatian* prince, still kept the field in rebellion, and plundered all caravans, without distinction; but as if those hostilities had not been sufficient to compleat the miseries of the califat, a new set of enthusiasts, disciples of the famous *Hanbal*, now domineered in *Bagdad*, where they were extremely powerful. Pretending to a more than ordinary purity of life and conversation, and to greater sanctity of religion, they broke open doors, spilt and destroyed all the wine they found, broke all the instruments of music that came in their way, beat the performers most unmercifully, and committed a thousand other extravagancies; nor could they be reduced to quiet, without vast difficulty on the part of the government.

Disorders of the Hanbalites.

Distresses of the califf.

Al Radi, who was far from being destitute either of virtues or abilities, was destitute of power, to make head, either against his foreign, or domestic, enemies. His authority was now in a manner confined within the walls of *Bagdad*, and his treasury, by the rebels withholding the annual tributes

tributes they had contracted to pay, was entirely exhausted. Hej. 324. His vizir *Mokla*, was visibly unequal to his high post, and A.D. 935. the people of *Bagdad*, in an insurrection, had driven him and his son out of the Eastern, to the Western, part of that city his capital. In this distress *Al Radi* threw his eyes upon one power to *Ebn Rayek*, as his assistant, rather than his minister, in the *Ebn Rayek* empire. This *Ebn Rayek* had been, for some time, sovereign of *Waset* and *Basra*, and was one of those upstart tyrants, that had been engendered in the troubles of the califat, by which he had acquired immense credit and riches. Like the other upstart rebels, he had withdrawn the tribute which he had agreed to pay to the califf, so that the latter was reduced to the utmost distress. He therefore fairly proposed to resign to *Ebn Rayek* all his real power in the califat, or, in other words, to farm it out to him upon condition of his, *Al Radi*'s, retaining the title, rank and respect that was due to a califf. *Ebn Rayek* agreed to the proposal, and he entered into possession of his new post, which never had before been heard of in the califat, under the title of *Emir Al Omra*, which signifies Lord over Lords. In this quality, he had the absolute disposal of the army and the finances, and he even could officiate in the great mosques, as chief iman at *Bagdad*. His name was likewise inserted in all the public prayers, and the califf himself, without his permission, could not dispose of a farthing of the public money.

This *Ebn Rayek* was, originally, a *Seljukian Turk*, a race of people we shall have occasion afterwards to describe, and often to mention. The office of *Emir Al Omra*, in a manner superceded that of vizir; and it appears, that though *Al Radi* had been obliged to part with *Al Mokla*, as his minister, yet he was grateful enough not to ruin him, and he still had great credit about his court. *Ebn Rayek* took possession of his high dignity in the end of December this year, and he appointed one *Amed*, a native of *Cusa*, to be his secretary of state, without manifesting any jealousy of the late vizir, whom he seems to have replaced in his post of vizir, and then to have dismissed him, by which he made *Mokla*, his irreconcilable enemy. The great attention of *Ebn Rayek*, when he entered upon his administration, was how to make the most of his new dignity. The name of califf, under whose sanction he acted, was still venerable amongst true *Moslems*, and some of the tyrants found great conveniency with their own subjects, in preserving his countenance, by paying him their tribute. *Ebn Al Akshed*, the sovereign of *Egypt*, had been driven from *Alexandria* to *Barka*, by *Ahmed*, the califf's governor of *Egypt*, and having with some difficulty recovered *Alexandria*, and defeated the garrison, he thought proper to enter into a compromise with *Al Radi*, who gave him the full grant of the government of *Egypt*, upon the payment of a certain sum.

But

Disgrace-
ful peace
with *Abu*
Tbaer.

But that was not the case with *Abu Tbaer*, the *Karmatian* prince, whose subjects both hated and despised Mahometanism. He still kept the field, at the head of powerful armies, and rendered himself terrible to all parties; and of late had got the possession of *Cufa*. *Ebn Rayek* therefore found himself under the necessity of concluding with him a most shameful peace, and rendering the califat tributary to this rebel in the annual sum of one hundred and twenty thousand dinars, upon condition of his forbearing to plunder the *Moslem* caravans.

Al Baridi
rebels a-
gainst
him.

Is subdued
by *Yah-*
cam.

Baridi
sets up for
himself.

This disgraceful treaty was greatly forwarded by the state of *Ebn Rayek*'s own affairs. When he came to *Bagdad*, he found that the *Sajians*, and the *Hajanians*, governed every thing there, and he resolved to reduce them. He accordingly disarmed the *Sajians*, which made the *Hajanians* his enemies, though they durst not at that time give vent to their resentment. *Al Baridi* the tyrant of *Akwaz*, availed himself of this distracted state of affairs at *Bagdad*, to invade *Ebn Rayek*'s principality of *Waset*; the capital of which he took possession of. The news of this defection obliged *Ebn Rayek* to assemble a vast army, and taking along with him the califf in person, he advanced to dislodge the rebel from *Waset*. *Baridi*, finding himself unequal to the storm that was ready to break upon him, proposed a treaty, and agreed to deliver up *Waset*, and to pay to the califf an annual tribute of thirty thousand dinars. Upon this, *Ebn Rayek* marched his army back to *Bagdad*, where he was no sooner arrived, than he received intelligence, that *Baridi* had raised a fresh rebellion, retaken *Waset*, and made himself master of *Basra* itself; and all *Abwaz*. Upon this, *Ebn Rayek*, whom the state of public affairs detained at *Bagdad*, took into his pay a body of *Turkish* troops commanded by *Yahcam*, a general of the same nation, and a commander of great courage and experience. *Yahcam* immediately advanced at the head of his army, which was a very numerous one; and *Baridi* was once more driven from all his acquisitions, and obliged to take refuge at the court of *Amadowlah*, who was then sovereign of *Ispahan*, and the finest provinces of *Persia*, and *Mesopotamia*. *Yahcam* having performed his service, like the other tyrants, began to treat for the sovereignty of some of the conquests he had made. *Ebn Rayek*, accordingly, made him governor of *Abwaz*, upon his consenting to pay an annual tribute of thirty-eight thousand dinars. As to *Al Baridi*, he was assisted with an army by *Amadodowlah*, at whose court he took refuge, who advanced under *Moezzodowlah*, his brother, to dispossess *Yahcam* of his new government. But tho' he took *Basra*, it was retaken by *Baridi*, who repulsed him at *Waset*, and began now, like the other powerful traitors, to think of setting up for himself. In this he was greatly encouraged by the late vizir *Mokla*, who advised him by all means

means to attempt to dispossess *Ebn Rayek*. The correspondence between them however was discovered by *Ebn Rayek*, who intercepted a letter, written by *Mokla* to *Yahcam*, and shewed it to the califf. *Mokla* was then called for, and examined. At first he entirely denied the charge, but the letter being produced, he was ordered to take his trial, and sentenced to loose his right hand. *Mokla* was famous for having been the inventor of a most beautiful *Arabic* character, and for being the best penman amongst all the *Moslems*. Upon his receiving sentence, he upbraided the court for their barbarity in ordering that hand to be cut off, which had been so useful and ornamental to the cause of literature, and had wrote over several copies of the koran; and for their severity to a man, who had served in the sublime post of vizir, to three califfs successively. But if we are to believe historians, *Mokla*, had behaved in so incautious a manner, that the loss of his right hand must be deemed a very mild punishment for his offences. For he advised the califf to displace *Ebn Rayek*, from his post of *Emir Al Omar*, and to put *Yahcam* in his room; a change which, he said, would bring into the califf's treasury most immense sums of money. The califf discovered this letter to *Ebn Rayek*, and put him upon his guard. But *Mokla*, notwithstanding the lenity with which he had been treated, threw out most bitter invectives, both against the califf and *Ebn Rayek*; so that his punishment was increased. The executioner not only cut off his hand, but cut out his tongue, and he was thrown into a dungeon, where he most miserably perished. *Mokla* put to death.

The death of *Mokla* however, did not prevail upon *Yahcam* to lay aside his ambitious design, of driving *Ebn Rayek* from his post, and succeeding to his power. For after he had defeated *Moezzodowla*, he assembled a great army, and marching into the territories of *Bagdad*, he there defeated *Ebn Rayek*, who was obliged to fly, and to leave *Yahcam* in possession of his post. This happened in the 326th year of the Hejra. *Yahcam* entered upon the exercise of his office with great vigour, and kept the califf as much a cypher, as his predecessor had done. He formed, however, great schemes for the recovery of the califat, and in the 327th year of the Hejra, he marched against *Naserodawla*, a prince of the *Hamdan* family, who had obtained the sovereignty of *Mawjel*, and some of the capital provinces of *Persia*. *Naserodawla* was defeated with vast slaughter in a pitched battle, and forced to fly to *Amida*. It is probable, that *Yahcam* might have recovered at this time the possession of his provinces to the califat, had not *Ebn Rayek*, the late *Emir Al Omra*, invaded the district of *Bagdad* at the head of an army. This obliged *Yahcam* to clap up an accommodation with *Naserodawla*, who consented to pay five hundred thousand dinars yearly, for the quiet possession of his provinces. Matters were soon after in like manner compromised, between *Ebn Rayek*

A compromise between them.

Progress of Ebn Rayek,

who is defeated by Akshid.

Politeness of the Moslems.

Rayek and *Yahcam*; and the latter obtained from the califf the government of *Harran*, *Edeffa*, *Kinmisrin*, and other districts adjoining to the *Euphrates*, upon his paying an acknowledgement of tribute. This cession made *Ebn Rayek*, who seems to have been a man of infinite ambition, so powerful, that he formed a scheme of dispossessing *Al Ashed* of *Syria*, and *Egypt*. The *Moslems* appear, at this time, to have followed the same practice that then prevailed in *Europe*. Every bold adventurer for a sovereignty or a province, declared his intention, and enlisted all who were willing to follow his fortunes, allotting to each, his proportion of pay and plunder. This method in countries full of people, who knew no other trade than that of war and robbery, could not fail of bringing vast numbers to the field, especially, as was the case with *Ebn Rayek*, when the leader was a man of character and consequence.

Ebn Rayek soon got possession of *Hems*, *Damascus*, and *Al Ramla*, and then he marched into *Egypt*, where he was opposed at *Arish*, by *Al Akshid*, at the head of an army; a battle ensued, in which *Ebn Rayek's* forces did wonders, at first, and routed those of *Al Akshid*. The latter, who knew the ardour and temper of his enemies, and that plunder had brought them to the field, had foreseen this. He placed a strong body of reserve in an ambush, and charged *Ebn Rayek's* troops, who, instead of compleating their victory, ran to plunder the baggage, so opportunely, that he not only retrieved the field, but gained a compleat victory, and it was with difficulty that *Ebn Rayek* himself, with no more than seventy men in his following, made his escape with great difficulty to *Damascus*. But it was not long before *Ebn Rayek* was again at the head of a great army; with which he defeated and killed *Abu Nasr*, *Al Akshid's* brother, with a vast number of his troops. On this occasion, a scene of politeness and affection passed, which was very uncommon amongst barbarians; for *Ebn Rayek* was so touched with the death of *Abu Nasr*, that he sent his own son to condole with him upon his loss, and to disclaim his having had any hand in the same; nay, he even went so far, as to give *Al Akshid* leave to sacrifice the young man, should he think it necessary, to the ghost of his brother: this was a compliment that would be looked upon as being extravagant, did we not know the excesses to which the Eastern people, when they are complaisant, are apt to carry their politeness. *Al Akshid* received the compliment with a becoming grace, and sent the ambassador back, loaded with marks of his esteem and regard, and desiring the friendship of *Ebn Rayek*. This generous intercourse soon produced a peace; by which *Al Akshid* was put in possession of *Al Ramla*, but was obliged to pay annually, to *Ebn Rayek*, who seems to have had the authority of the califf and *Yahcam* on his side, one hundred and forty thousand dinars, so that *Ebn Rayek* remained in quiet

quiet possession of his *Syrian* provinces. We cannot close the transactions of this year, without taking notice of the death of that great historian *Eutichyus*. His original name was *Said Ebn Batrick*; he was a native of *Al Fostat*, in *Egypt*, and was bred a physician, in which profession he was eminent; but was raised to be patriarch of *Alexandria*, in the year of the Hejra 321. We therefore need not inform our readers, that he was a Christian Melchite. He was zealous, and wrote against the heresies of his countrymen, and he filled the patriarchal chair of *Alexandria* for seven years and a half. His history, which is in great esteem, is carried down from the creation of the world, to the 327th year of the Hejra; and is of authority with the best, even of the Moslem historians.

Death of
Eutichyus
the histo-
rian.

In the 329th year of the Hejra, died of a dropsy, the califf *Al Radi*, in the thirtieth year of his age, and the seventh of his reign. In his person he was swarthy, and his beard was thin. He was, for the most part of his reign, no better than the pupil of his two *Emir's Al Omra*; but at last, he was not wholly without influence. His name and authority was a weight in the contest between his rival *Emir's*, and always kept him above that public contempt, under which his successors in the califat sunk. According to the best authorities, he was a man of parts; generous, munificent, and a good poet, being the last of the califfs, whose poetical compositions have been handed down to posterity. As to the state of learning in his time, he was, as many of his predecessors had been, fond of his first physician, whom he made his friend and his companion; and he happened to be *Senan*, who was taken notice of in the former reign. Under him lived *Matthew*, the son of *Yunes*, a Christian historian, who was the greatest logician of the age, and, by way of eminence, was termed the Sage.

Death and
character
of the ca-
liff.

Al Motaki, the twenty-first califf of the house of Al Abbas.

THIS prince, whose original name was *Ibrahim*, or *Abraham*, was the son of the califf *Al Moktader*. Upon the decease of *Al Radi*, all the executive power of the government devolving upon *Yahcam*, whose affairs at that time, detained him at *Cufa*, he sent orders, by one of his secretaries of state, to the vizir *Abul Kasem*, at *Bagdad*, to assemble the judges, together with the heads of the houses of *Ali*, and *Al Abbas*, and other leading men, to proceed to the election of a new califf, which unanimously fell upon *Ibrahim*.

He is suc-
ceeded by
*Al Mo-
taki.*

Ibrahim; who, it is more than probable, had been previously nominated by *Yahcam*, though the ceremony of election was indispensable. *Al Motaki*, being thus raised to the Moslem throne, sent to *Yahcam*, who was now moved to *Waset*, a most magnificent robe and a banner, by which he continued him in his high station of *Emir Al Omra*. He likewise confirmed *Abul Kasem* in his nominal vizirship; for *Abdallah*, a *Cufan*, secretary of state to *Yahcam*, was the acting minister all over the empire, while *Al Tohini* was, at the request of *Yahcam*, made chamberlain to the califf.

Dismem-
berments
and par-
titions
of the ca-
liff at
Spain,
Africk
and
Europe.

Crete,

Egypt and
Syria.

Waset,
Bajra and
Cusa.
Persia;

Tabrestan,
Korasan,

Kermon,
Yamama
and *Bar-
hein*.

It is worth the reader's while, at this period, to throw his eyes upon the state of that once glorious empire the califat; and to consider it as now broken in pieces, and divided amongst rebels and usurpers. The Moslem part of *Spain*, as we have already seen, was still governed by princes descended from the house of *Ommiyah*; who assumed the title of califfs. The *Fatemite* dynasty, which afterwards obtained the sovereignty of *Egypt*, was upon the throne of *Kairwan*, and had extended their empire, not only over *Africa*, but as far as *Mangrabia*, and the western parts of *Arabia*; and by the assistance of the *Mangrabian* soldiers, they were now masters of the finest provinces in *Europe*, which they governed by deputies. *Crete*, which originally had been invaded, and conquered by the califf of the house of *Al Abbas*, was now governed by the descendants of *Abu Kab*, a *Magrabian* admiral, who had been in possession of it some years. *Egypt*, and a great part of *Syria*, as may be seen in the history of the last califf, was held by *Al Akshid*, and *Mawfel*, with some of the finest provinces of *Persia*, and *Mesopotamia*, by usurpers of the house of *Handan*. *Waset*, *Bajra*, and *Cusa*, were looked upon as the property of *Ebn Rayek*, though his possession of them was disputed by another rebel *Baridi*. The ancient *Persia*, that garden of the world, was governed by *Amadodawla*, the founder of the dynasty of *Buiyans*, and the rest of the *Persian Irak*, with *Al Jebel*, was held by his brother *Rocnodawla*, who reigned at *Ispahan*, as *Amadodawla* did at *Skiraz*. *Washmakin* the *Deylamite*, held many other provinces of the same noble country, and his brother *Mardawij*, governed the provinces of *Tabrestan*, *Jorjan*, and *Mazanderan*, and was the founder of the *Deylamite* dynasty. *Al Nasr*, the son of *Abmed*, was sovereign of *Korasan*, and other fine districts in its neighbourhood, and was founder of the dynasty of the *Sommanians*. *Abu Ali* of the same family, was master of *Kermon*; and *Abu Thacr*, as we have already seen, was the tyrant of *Yamama*, and *Barhein*, with the district of *Hajr*.

The reader, from this state of the califat, undoubtedly conceives, that many acts of usurpation upon it, have been but slightly touched upon in this history; but he is to reflect, that the prodigious number of revolutions, the variety and distance

distance of scenes of action, the confusion of persons, times and places, with the uncertainty of events, and above all the scarcity of historians to record them, renders it impossible for a modern writer to particularize all the distant scenes of action, arising through so extended an empire. It is plain, from the view that has been here exhibited, that the califat, properly so called, was contracted into a very narrow compass; that of *Bagdad*, its district and dependencies. We cannot be of opinion that those dependencies were so very small as some authors have represented them to be. They did not consist so much in territory, as in the great veneration that was still annexed to the office of califf, by all the *Sonnites*, who were the body of the *Moslems*, and which gave him still vast influence even in the governments that were dismembered from his empire; for all of them looked on him as the chief iman, or sovereign of the Moslem religion. Besides this, many of the usurpers, as has been already observed, found great conveniency in paying him an annual tribute; a right which the califfs of *Bagdad* never departed from, even in the lowest state of their affairs. At the same time, it must be acknowledged, that the califat, exclusive of *Bagdad* and its district, had little or no real power, but the remains of that veneration, the people had once entertained for it.

Power of
the califfs.

In the first year of *Al Motaki's* reign, *Macan* the Deylamite, was driven from *Georgia*, to *Tabrestan*, and joined *Washma-kin*, a Deylamite likewise. But their united armies were entirely defeated by *Abu Ali*, and *Macan* was killed in the battle. After this, *Ray* submitted to *Abu Ali*, by which he acquired a vast extent of dominions.

Revolu-
tion in
Tabrestan.

Yahcam all this time continued to exercise his post of *Emir Al Omra*, and in the 329th year of the Hejra, the war with *Baridi* recommenced, and *Yahcam* raised an army to suppress him, intending to head it in person. His generals, however, having defeated the rebel before he could arrive at his army, in the wantonness of power, he resolved upon an excursion that should answer the double ends of pleasure and profit. For hearing of a curd or clan of *Turks*, who were very rich and numerous, and seated on the banks of the river *Jaur*, he resolved, as his army was on foot, to plunder them, and at the same time, to take the diversion of hunting. He accordingly, at the head of a party, fell upon the *Curds* in the midst of his hunting, and plundered them. He even distinguished himself above all his followers by his barbarity, so that a young *Curd*, who was ignorant of his quality, singled him out for his inhumanity, and running him through with a lance laid him dead at his feet. The news of *Yahcam's* death reaching *Bagdad*, the califf *Motaki* looked upon it as a deliverance, and immediately seized upon his palace and all his effects, amongst which were the rich tapestry he had formerly carried off from the imperial

imperial court, and a vast treasure that was found buried under ground.

Curtakin
made *E-*
mir Al
Omra.

Baridi
takes
Bagdad.

The califf
assisted by
the *Ham-*
dan
princes,

who act
from mer-
cenary
motives.

Yahcam's death left the post of *Emir Al Omra* vacant, and the califf bestowed it upon one *Curtakin*, a *Deylamite*. But two other candidates soon started up. *Ebn Rayek*, the former *Emir*, and *Baridi*, both of whom had now arrived at a vast pitch of power. *Curtakin*, being found unfit for the place, *Ebn Rayek* was preferred by the califf; while *Baridi* marching at the head of an army to *Bagdad*, made himself master of that capital, and obliged the califf to give him five hundred thousand dinars, for the use of his troops. But *Baridi* applying the money to his own use, his army mutinied, and obliged him, his brother, son, and domestics, to retire by water to *Waset*. As plunder was the common principle both with the general and his soldiers, they soon after came to a good understanding, and (unless historians have made two expeditions of what really was but one) once more made themselves masters of *Bagdad*, in the 330th year of the *Hejra*.

The califf being in no condition to oppose this powerful rebel, was obliged to throw himself upon one of the *Handamite* princes, who was then in possession of *Mansel*, and a great part of *Syria* and *Mesopotamia*. This chief readily afforded the califf a retreat, and acted with so much spirit in his defence and restoration, that *Al Motaki* dignified him with the illustrious title of *Nasserodawla*, or "Protector of the state," and his brother, with that of *Saifodawla*, "The Sword of state." But it soon appeared, that all their kindness and duty towards the califf, proceeded from interested motives. All the usurpers who had built their own fortunes upon the ruins of the califf, sought to enlarge them at one anothers expence, and, as has been already observed, the remaining veneration that was still invested in the person of the califf, rendered his countenance of vast importance to the party he espoused. *Nasserodawla* furnished *Al Motaki*, with all kind of carriages and equipages, at a city called *Tecret*, upon the borders of *Assyria*, within six days journey of *Mawfel*, to which city he was conducted with great magnificence, attended by *E'n Rayek*, the *Emir Al Omra*, and others of his great men. He was lodged in a part of *Mawfel* that was appropriated to his use, and entertained suitable to his quality. All this was done from mercenary motives; for, *Nasserodawla* put *Ebn Rayek* to death, and rendered himself the master of the califf, though it is doubtful whether he assumed the title of *Emir Al Omra*. He then gave the command of an army to his brother *Saifodawla*, who marched to *Bagdad*, from whence he dislodged *Baridi*, took two thousand of his men, and made a great slaughter of the rest. The califf *Al Motaki*, upon this, returned in great triumph to *Bagdad*, where the two brothers *Nasserodawla* and *Saifodawla*, had the direction of every

every thing; the former in the state, and the latter in the army. The first attention of *Saifodawla*, after the califf's return to *Bagdad*, was to reform the golden coin, which had by various arts and incidents been greatly reduced, and then he gave his daughter in marriage, with the sum of five hundred thousand dirhems for her dower, to the califf's son. It appears, however, that the califf's dominions were obliged to furnish this money; which so exhausted his Exchequer, that the *Turkish* troops mutinied for their pay, drove *Saifodawla* from his camp, and in the end, obliged *Naisferodawla* to return to *Mawfel*. By their retreat, the califf was left in the hands of the *Turks*, who were commanded by one *Tuzun*, whom *Al Motaki*, though he greatly disliked him, was obliged to make *Emir Al Omra*. We are told by some historians, *Naisferodawla*, before he left *Bagdad*, made use of the califf's authority, for raising the sum of four hundred thousand dinars, under pretence of encouraging the army to oppose the *Turks*; but *Naisferodawla*, no sooner got possession of the money, than he abandoned *Bagdad* to *Tuzun*, and returned to *Mawfel*. The tyranny of *Tuzun* proved insupportable to *Al Motaki*, who had now no other resource, than to retire to *Al Rakka*, from whence he invited the *Egyptian* califf *Akshid*, to pity his misfortunes, and to take him under his protection. *Al Akshid* immediately repaired to the califf at *Al Rakka*, made him magnificent presents, furnished him with money, and offered him a retreat in his dominions, 'till he should be reinstated in full possession of the califat.

The coin reformed.

Tuzun the *Turk* gets possession of *Bagdad*.

And the califf is expelled, but is assisted by *Akshid*.

So powerful a protection brought *Naisferodawla*, and the princes of the house of *Hamdan*, to a sense of their duty, and they repaired to *Al Rakka*, where they too offered *Al Motaki* their services. But the califf, either impatient to be so long absent from *Bagdad*, or being in hopes, that his authority could ballance parties greatly to his advantage, entered into a private treaty with *Tuzun*; and sent him proposals for his return to *Bagdad*. The barbarian accepted of those proposals seemingly with the greatest joy, and offered to take his oath for the performance of them. It was in vain for *Al Akshid*, and the princes of the house of *Hamdan*, to remonstrate to the califf upon the danger of trusting a perfidious barbarian; for he rejected all their councils, and *Akshid* returned towards *Egypt*; as *Naisferodawla* did towards *Mawfel*, while *Al Motaki* set out for *Bagdad*. He stopt however at *Hit*, a town on the northern bank of the *Euphrates*, 'till he could be more certain of *Tuzun*'s sincerity. But receiving fresh assurances of it, and that he was ready to fulfil every thing upon oath; he continued his journey towards *Bagdad*. When he came to the town of *Al Sendira* he there found *Tozun*, encamped at the head of an army. Upon the califf's approach, the barbarian alighted

He enters into a treaty with *Tuzun*, and

returns towards *Bagdad*.

Disimulation of *Tuzun*.

alighted from his horse, prostrated himself before *Al Motaki* walked on foot by his stirrup, and upon their arrival at the head quarters, the califf was treated with all the respect and deference, that was due to his high rank. This seems to have happened in the 333d year of the Hejra.

Hej. 333. By this time, the miseries of the califat were inexpressible.
A.D. 944. The *Greeks* had taken the cities of *Erzerun*, *Daras*, and
The califf *Nisibis*, and had committed prodigious ravages upon the
buys Moslem dominions. This induced the califf to court their
peace of emperor, by making him a present of the famous handker-
the *Greeks* chief, which was said to have been sent by our Saviour im-
by a pre- pressed with an exact print of his face, to *Abgar* the king of
sent of *Al Roba*, or *Edeffa*, which now belonged to the *Moslems*.
our Sa- As the authenticity of this handkerchief received great
viour's countenance from antiquity, as well as the story of *Abgar*,
handker- no doubt was made of its being a true relict; and it was re-
chief. ceived by the clergy, and court of *Constantinople*, with the
utmost pomp and veneration, being deposited in the church
of *St. Sophia* there, and preserved 'till that city was taken by
the *Turks*. This seasonable present seems to have brought
about a peace between the two empires.

Great fa- But the califat in general was, at this time, in a most de-
mine at plorable situation. The public disorders, having caused
Bagdad. all agriculture to be neglected, a most dreadful famine raged
at *Bagdad*; where the people were obliged to subsist upon
bran, and at last upon hay, while the mortality was such,
that heaps of *Moslems* were buried in one grave, without
those ablutions, and funeral rites, which they think so es-
sential to their interment. Those and many other calamities,
which happened about the same time to the califat, deter-
mined *Tuzun* to dethrone *Motaki*, and to raise to the throne
Al Mostacfi, the son of the califf *Al Motafi*. This was ac-
cordingly performed, and the dethroned califf soon after
had his eyes put out. As to his character little can be said,
for he was not above four years in the possession of the ca-
lifat. His power was reduced to a kind of an eccle-
siastical jurisdiction, and therefore we may easily suppose,
that the character which writers give him, of his having been
a religious prince, is just. He died about the 60th year of
his age.

*Al Mostacfi, the twenty-second califf of the house of
Al Abbas.*

Mostacfi - THE accession of this califf to the Moslem throne, is
made ca- a pregnant proof of the contempt into which that
lif. dignity was now fallen. A woman called *Alam*, found means
to

to assure *Tuzun*, that *Al Mostackfi* was a very worthy person. *Tuzun* immediately made him califf, and after exacting the oath of obedience to him, from all persons, he declared himself *Emir Al Omra*; which was now become a post, that gave law to the califf himself. *Al Mostackfi* begun his reign with an act of decency, for he released his predecessor *Al Motaki*, from his confinement, but he still found himself embroiled with the *Greeks*. In an irruption they made, He is embroiled by they penetrated as far as *Aleppo*, but they were repulsed by *Saifodawla*, whom we have had occasion so often to mention. At this time, this tyrant and his family were far more powerful than the califf; but he had a competitor, in the person of *Ajhad*, the califf of *Egypt*, and their forces were so equal, that *Saifodawla*, though he made himself master of *Hems* and *Aleppo*, was obliged to desist from his attempt upon *Damascus*: and a general action ensuing, neither party could boast of the victory.

In the 334th year of the Hejra, died *Tuzun*, the *Emir Al Omra*, which high station was immediately usurped by *Zairac*, another *Turk*. The perquisites, however, of this high post, which in fact still depended upon the califf, rendered it a very considerable object of ambition. The district of *Bagdad* was annexed to it, and there still was not only a reverence, but an actual revenue, that accrued to it from the several tyrants, who had parcelled out the califat. *Moezzodawla*, therefore, put in his claim to be *Emir Al Omra*, and being in possession of *Abwaz*, he was so powerful, that he struck terror into the *Turks* themselves. The califf *Al Mostackfi*, and *Zairac*, were chased from *Bagdad*, but the califf himself was wise enough to come under the protection of *Moezzodawla*, who immediately recognized his authority, and compromised matters with *Zairac*; who was appointed collector of all the public revenues.

The califat, by this revolution, being in some degree emancipated from the tyranny of the *Turks*, the califf seemed to enjoy himself, and bestowed very high distinctions on *Moezzodawla*, and his family. Their names and titles of honour were even inscribed upon the coin; and the califf, as the first slave of the empire, was allowed about two hundred pounds a day, for his subsistence; but his palace was possessed, as well as his real power, by *Moezzodawla*, the *Emir Al Omra*. Notwithstanding this, *Al Mostackfi* the califf, still preserved all appearances of sovereignty; and, as usual, gave audience to all foreign ambassadors. But his favourite mistress, *Al Am*, was dissatisfied with *Moezzodawla*, and caballed with some of the great men of the empire, to remove him from the post of *Emir Al Omra*. *Moezzodawla* discovered this, but covered it with profound dissimulation. On a day appointed by the califf to give audience to an ambassador from the *Emir* of *Korasan*, he repaired to the palace

A GENERAL HISTORY

He de-
thrones
the califf.

with a strong guard, of which he disposed properly. He then went into the presence of the califf, prostrated himself before him, and as usual kissed the hem of his garment. Soon after, two of his principal officers came in, and the califf extended to them his hands to kiss. But instead of kissing them, they seized him by the wrists, dragged him from his throne, and with all marks of indignity, that possibly could be exerted, they forced him to *Moezzodawla's* house, where he was ironed and confined in a dungeon: soon after, he was deprived of his sight, and his favourite mistress *Al Am*, had her tongue cut out. As this califf reigned only sixteen months, we can say little or nothing about his character; nor indeed, can he properly be considered as a sovereign prince. At the time of his death he was about forty-one years of age.

Al Moti, the son of the deceased califf Moktader, the twenty-third califf of the house of Al Abbas.

Al Moti
succeeds
to the ca-
lifat.

THIS califf, being the son of *Al Moktader*, succeeded without any opposition, to the imperial dignity; but like his immediate predecessors, he was no better than a cypher in the government; which continued to be usurped by *Moezzodawla*. That tyrannical minister, denied to his master, even the common necessities of life, and allowed him only one servant; who kept an account of the money he expended.

Bagdad
taken.

Naiserodawla still remained in the possession of the principality of *Mawfel*, and either from a sense of duty or ambition. he undertook to deliver the califf from the tyranny of the *Deylamites*, under *Moezzodawla*. With this view, *Naiserodawla* advanced to *Bagdad*, at the head of the *Hamdanite* forces, and obliged *Moezzodawla*, with his pupil the califf, to retreat with great precipitation to *Tecrit*. *Naiserodawla*, upon this, possessed himself of all the eastern part of *Bagdad*. *Moezzodawla* having recruited himself, returned to dislodge his rival out of *Bagdad*; but finding that impracticable, the last of the year was spent in skirmishes; without any decisive effect.

Affairs of
Egypt.

About this time, died the celebrated *Al Asbed*, the califf of *Egypt*, in an advanced age. He was one of the most successful rebels that we read of in history. But in all other respects, he was a great man. He was brave, just, and generous; and about the time of his death, he was renewing his preparations to deliver the califf from his tyrants. We are told that before his death, a severe writing was found in his

his palace, censuring his conduct, which affected him greatly. His son *Abul Husem*; a minor, succeeded him; but an *Ethiopian*, one *Casur*, held the reigns of government. The death of *Al Ashed*, encouraged *Saifodawla*, who seems by that time to have made up matters with *Moezzodawla*, to make himself master of *Damascus*. But his tyranny being insupportable to the inhabitants, they invited *Casur* to deliver them from it. He accordingly marched a body of *Egyptian* troops, who expelled *Saifodawla* out of the city, the government of which was given to *Baddar*. After this event, *Saifodawla*, went to *Aleppo*, where he shut himself up, and he seems to have proclaimed war against all the world. For being one of those free-booters, we have already described, he never was without soldiers, who partook in his spoils. Accordingly, we find him next year invading the neighbouring territories, which he rendered a scene of desolation where-ever he marched. An imperial army, (for the *Greek* emperors were still very powerful in the East) being sent against him, he killed twenty thousand of the *Greeks*, and took two thousand prisoners, with very little loss to himself. In short, he appears at this time to have been the absolute master of the califat; nor is the insignificant califf so much as mentioned in history. The reason why *Saifodawla* did not reside at *Bagdad*, was, because a famine raged then in that city, to such a degree, that mothers dressed their own children for food, and a pestilence succeeding, the famine laid the country almost desolate.

His wars
with the
Greeks,

The residence of *Saifodawla* continued still to be at *Aleppo*, from whence he made excursions over all the neighbouring countries; for, in the 336th year of the *Hejra*, we are told, that he took *Bursa*, the antient *Prusa*, situated near mount *Olympus* in *Bythinia*; but the reader is to remark, that *Ptolemy* mentions two towns of that name in the same province. *Saifodawla* having taken the place, destroyed its fortifications. But he met with a powerful enemy, in the person of *Al Moterassi*, who succeeded to the command of the *Karmatians*; and who defeated a prince of the house of *Hamdan*, who had been made governor of *Hems* by *Saifodawla*. The latter, however, collecting his forces together, and marching them towards *Hems*, which was then in *Al Moterassi*'s possession, the *Karmatian* was totally defeated. Very few of his men escaped, and he himself being taken, his head was cut off, and carried before the conqueror on the point of a lance. This conquest was esteemed so glorious, that *Saifodawla* was complimented upon it, by one of his kinsmen, of the *Hamdan* family, in an elegant copy of *Arabian* verses. After that, he returned to *Aleppo*, which he made the seat of his residence, and concluded a treaty with *Moezzodawla*, to whom he seems to have resigned the post of *Emir* *Al Omra*; for we perceive, that *Moezzodawla* soon after

His peace
with *Mo-*
ezzodaw-
la,

took

took up his residence at *Bagdad*. This alliance left *Moezzodawla* at liberty to prosecute his animosity against *Nasrodawla*, whom he dispossessed of *Marafel*. But while *Moezzodawla* was employed in this expedition, the Emir, or sovereign of *Korasan*, made an irruption into his territories, that obliged him to abandon his new conquest, which immediately reverted to *Nasrodawla*. About the same time, *Saifodawla*, was defeated by the *Greeks*, who soon after took *Marafel*, and besieged *Tarsus*.

Affairs of *Kairwan*, During those transactions, *Al Mansur*, the califf of *Kairwan* in *Africa*, was making as glorious a figure as that of the califf of *Bagdad*, was despicable. He extinguished a rebellion, raised by *Abu Yezid*, whom he defeated in two battles, and having dispossessed him of *Al Catama*, he made him prisoner, and put him to death. This califf continued still to be sovereign of *Sicily*, but he committed the government of it to one *Al Hajan*, who reigned with great moderation and glory.

and of *Persia*. The vast kingdom of *Persia*, like the other dominions of the califat, was, at this time, parcelled out amongst usurpers; nor is it very easy to account for that absolute dominion which each acquired, in his government. It seems, principally, to have been owing to that perpetuity of power, with which the califfs of late, had invested the governors of their chief provinces, and which undoubtedly was a capital error in their politics; and could be accounted for, only by the necessity of the times. *Amadodawla* was, at this time, the most powerful of the *Persian* princes; and in great reputation, for his virtue and wisdom. Having no male issue, he adopted his nephew *Adadodawla*, to be his successor. This *Adadodawla* was the son of *Rucnodawla*. All the three princes were the sons of *Buiya*, but *Amadodawla* was the eldest. He gave to his nephew, and adopted successor, *Adadodawla*, the title of sultan, or sovereign lord, which was afterwards adopted by the eastern princes, and is still used by them. But though *Amadodawla* was the first who made use of this term, yet it seems not to have become general 'till some years after. Be this as it will, *Adadodawla* having succeeded to his uncle, the army refused to obey him. Upon this, his father *Rucnodawla*, marched to his assistance. His first measure was to pay a solemn visit, bare legged, attended by all his troops, bare legged likewise, to the tomb of his elder brother *Amadodawla*, where he resided for three days, paying his devotions. This ceremony, ridiculous as it may seem, had its due effect, and we are told that *Adadodawla* recovered his authority. It appears likewise, that *Amadodawla*, and *Rucnodawla* his brother, were successively Emirs *Al Omras*, but that the third brother *Moezzodawla*, though he executed the functions of the place, under his brothers, never was properly invested with the dignity. This circumstance, however, serves to con-

from what we have often observed, that the califfs of *Bagdad*, still retained a pre-eminence of authority, which was submitted to by the greatest of the eastern princes; who were proud to have the title of being their chief servants.

In the mean while, the restless *Saifodawla*, once more invaded the *Greek* territories, with fire and desolation; and carried desolation almost to the very bowels of that empire. It is said, that he put thirty thousand of the *Greeks* to the sword, and took two thousand prisoners. The imperial general however, found means to draw him into a mountainous pass, where his whole army was cut to pieces, himself narrowly escaping, while his military chest, and all his baggage, fell into the hands of the conqueror; who at the same time recovered all the prisoners and the spoils, that had been taken from his own nation. The darkness of the night alone saved *Saifodawla*, with his few attendants, who escaped the sword, to the number of about three hundred. His defeat is, by the Moslem historians, attributed entirely to his own obstinacy, in marching into the defile, where he was surrounded. The name of the general, who obtained this signal success, was *Zemifces*. As to *Saifodawla* himself he escaped first to *Adana* in *Cilicia*, and then returned to *Aleppo*, where he reigned with all the splendour of a powerful Monarch. Tho' he was bloody and barbarous, yet he is said to have encouraged men of learning, and particularly an eminent Turkish philosopher, named *Al Farabi*, to whom he paid great distinctions, on account of his virtue and learning; we are likewise informed, that many other Scholars of note resorted to his court, and were caressed by him. His vizir, or chief minister, was taken prisoner in his late defeat; and died in chains at *Constantinople*.

Saifado-w-la invades the *Greek* empire.

and is defeated.

In the 341st year of the Hejra, an emir called *Yusef*, who commanded at *Oman* laid siege to *Basra*, which was still nominally under the allegiance of the califf. *Moezzodawla*, as we have already seen, at that time acted under his brother *Rocnodawla*, as *Emir Al Omra*, and he dispatched one of his generals, *Al Mohalebi*, at the head of an army to raise the siege, which he did; and so effectually suppressed *Yusef's* rebellion, which he had raised at the head of some *Karmatian* troops, that he never afterwards made any figure in the field. The rest of the transactions of this year, are so blended together, that the whole narrative of them is absurd and confused. All that we know is, that the *Greeks* and the *Moslems* mutually invaded each other, and that the *European Moslems* were so much divided amongst themselves, that their power both in *Spain* and *Scicily*, was greatly reduced; but the history of those divisions does not properly belong to this place. The war however still continued between *Moezzadawla* and *Nasferodawla*. The former dispossessed the latter of *Mawfel*; and made himself master of all that rich province. But the *Hamdans* were so powerful, that *Nasferodawla*

Hej. 341.
A. D. 952.

A rebellion suppressed.

War between the

houses of
Buya and
Hamdan,

and in E-
gypt.

Character
of *Saifo-*
dowla.

erodawla seems to have been unable to maintain his conquests; for we are told that he soon after made peace with *Naserodawla*, and returned to *Bagdad*. In the mean while, the throne of *Adherbijan*, was usurped by *Wahshudan*, who first imprisoned, and then put to death, his nephews; to whom it belonged of right. Many other revolutions happened about the same time in the califat. The king of *Nubia*, an upstart power, scarce never heard of before, besieged and took *Aswan*, an important city in the upper *Egypt*, upon the eastern bank of the *Nile*. But the *Egyptians*, who were then commanded by *Casur*, engaged the *Nubians*, and not only defeated them, but invaded *Nubia* itself, and took *Al Rim* one of its chief fortresses. This *Casur*, whom we have already mentioned to have been an *Æthiopian*, was originally a slave of that nation; and was purchased by *Al Ashed*, for about nine pound sterling. Upon the death of his master he became, in fact, the sovereign of *Egypt*, tho' he suffered *Al Ashed's* sons to retain the title. Upon his death, the public affairs of *Egypt* fell into such disorder, that we have no certain account of his successor, nor indeed of the affairs of that country, till it was conquered by *Al Moazz*, the califf of *Kirwan*.

The actions of *Saifodowla*, one of the most celebrated captains of the age in which he lived, form the most considerable periods of the history of this califat. The reader has already seen, that he was of the *Bouya* family, and that the former part of his life, was a continual course of rebellion war and bloodshed. Notwithstanding that, his court at *Aleppo*, at the time of his death, was incomparably the most magnificent and polite, of any in the east. His courage was unquestionable, and ambition seems to have been the only fault, of which, as a prince, he could be accused. His palace was open to the learned and ingenious of all denominations, but especially poets; and some poetical fragments of his own composition, have been transmitted by historians, to later times. As he was a fine poet, he is said to have been a tender lover, and that a beauty of royal extraction engaged his affection so much, that he kept her apart in a palace, which he allotted for her use, lest she should be poisoned by his other wives. He was in continual wars with the *Greeks*, with various success. They happened to take prisoner one of his kinsmen, *Abu Taras*, who was a poet likewise, and so much beloved by *Saifodowla*, that a little before his death, he settled a cartel with the *Greeks*, principally with a view of obtaining his kinsman's liberty. The califf *Al Moti* however, is scarcely mentioned during the history of his own reign; tho' it is very plain, that his countenance and authority must have been of infinite consequence to the several parties who governed under him. We are told, that about this time, *Moazzodowla*, who was the acting emir *Al Omra*, put to sale all the public posts at *Bagdad*;

dad; and that he sold that of *cadi*, or chief Justice, for an annuity of about ten thousand pound which was paid to himself. From this circumstance it appears, that the court of *Bagdad*, was still upon many occasions, applied to as the supreme tribunal of the eastern *Moslems*.

The divisions, and weakness of the califat, undoubtedly *Successes* contributed greatly to the successes of the *Greeks*, under of the *Nicephorus* the imperial general, who in some degree restored *Greeks*. the splendour of that empire. The chief seat of the *Moslem* Government at this time in *Europe*, appears to have been *Sicily*, by which they had a convenient intercourse with *Spain*, *Italy*, and other *European* countries; in which they were very powerful. *Al Hasan* continued to govern *Sicily* as first emir, under the califf of *Kairwan*, and had at this period a very considerable fleet at sea; far superior to that of the Christian powers, whom he terribly harrassed. But after the entire defeat of *Saifodawla*, already mentioned, the *Greeks* recovered themselves so much, that *Al Hasan* agreed to a cartel and released many of the Christian prisoners; Yet we are told that he carried with him to *Africa*, the chief *Sicilian* nobility to be instructed in the faith of *Mahomet*.

Next year, however, *Nicephorus*, (called *Phocas*) the im- Who take perial general, made a fresh irruption into the *Moslem* ter- *Ain Zar-* ritories, at the head of sixty thousand men, and took *Ain ba,* *Zarba*, formerly called, *Anazarbus*. The design of *Nicephorus* in this expedition, seems to have been to expel the *Moslem* inhabitants entirely out of that city, and its neighbourhood. Some writers say, that according to the capitulation he made with them, they were obliged to retire, but were suffered to carry off their effects. It is said by others, that when *Nicephorus* took the city, he obliged all the inhabitants to betake themselves to the great mosque, and that the *Greeks* butchered all, who had not either time to repair thither, or could not be admitted for want of room. Be this as it will, it is certain, that *Nicephorus* obliged them to leave the place, and that many of the inhabitants were cut in pieces, before it was evacuated.

After this conquest, *Nicephorus* marched against *Saifodawla*, and (whom the *Greeks* corruptly called *Chabdamus*, which is a *Aleppo*. corruption of *Hamadan* the eldest branch of the *Buya* family) with an army, consisting, according to some historians, of two hundred thousand men. *Saifodowla* was then at *Aleppo*, and it appears, from the preparations made by *Nicephorus* to subdue him, that he had on foot vast bodies of forces; and that his cavalry was very formidable. For amongst the military equipages of *Nicephorus*, we are told he had four thousand mules laden with thorns, (or what the moderns call *Cheveux de Frize*) an engine pointed with steel which the foot throw before them to defend them from the attack of the horse. *Saifodowla*, hearing of the approach of

but the
citadel is
relieved.

Moezzodawla is
a *Shiite*.

Hej. 353.
A.D. 963.

of *Nicephorus*, divided his forces into two bodies. One of them he sent, under *Naja*, his general, to fight *Nicephorus* upon the frontiers of his dominions, and with the other body, which he commanded himself, he covered *Aleppo*. *Nicephorus*, having by a masterly march, eluded the vigilance of *Naja*, surprized *Saifodowla*, who was encamped upon an eminence called *Bankowsa*, near *Aleppo*, and not only defeated him, but made himself master of his palace, where he found an immense treasure, a magazine of arms, and fourteen hundred mules. The *Greeks* then laid siege to *Aleppo* itself, which was the great object of their expedition; and tho' they attacked it with great fury, and a variety of military engines, they were several times repulsed. It does not appear whether *Saifodowla*, upon this occasion was in the city, tho' it is most probable that he was, and that he had been betrayed, by his general *Naja*. A quarrel arose, between the townsmen, and the garrison, which obliged the latter to withdraw from the walls; and the *Greeks* made use of that opportunity to storm the place, with a vast slaughter of the inhabitants, ten thousand of whom they made captives. The garrison upon this retreated into the citadel, which *Nicephorus* likewise besieged. But the cause of *Saifodowla* became now a common one with all the *Moslems*, who were greatly alarmed, at the formidable progress of *Nicephorus*. *Thalem* therefore, the *Egyptian* Governor of *Damascus*, advanced with an army, to *Saifodowla's* assistance, and *Nicephorus*, whose troops undoubtedly had suffered greatly, found himself obliged to abandon the siege about 10 days after he had taken the city. Notwithstanding this misfortune, *Nicephorus* seems to have passed the winter in the neighbourhood of *Aleppo*, where he took several places of importance, for by this time, *Naja*, *Saifodowla's* general, had declared for himself; and after defeating *Abul Werd*, the tyrant of *Kalat*, had seized upon that principality.

Moezzodawla, still continued to exercise the place of emir *Al Omra* at *Bagdad*. He was in his religious principles a strong *Shiite*, and published upon the doors of the mosques at *Bagdad*, a most solemn malediction, against *Moawiyah* the first califf of that name, and all the enemies of the family of *Ali*; and their descendants. This was very disagreeable to the *Sonnite* party, who erased the malediction, but *Moezzodawla*, being the absolute master of *Bagdad*, they were obliged to submit. He even this year appointed a solemn fast, in commemoration of *Al Honein*, the son of *Ali*. On this occasion, all the shops, and public places of *Bagdad* were shut up, and the women of the place were obliged to walk in procession, with dishevelled hair, rending their garments, and beating their breasts. Soon after this, *Moezzodawla* received an irreparable loss in the death of *Mohallebi*, his first minister, a man of great virtue and abilities.

The

The year after, the war between the *Moslems* and the *Greeks*, still continued, and a battle was fought between them, near *Tarsus*, in which both parties suffered severely; *Greeks* the loss to the *Moslems* being five thousand men, and that continue of the *Christians*, greater. The latter, however, seem to have had the advantage, for we perceive that, soon after, they took by storm the city *Mossisiya*, which they had before besieged in vain, and cut in pieces a great number of the inhabitants; who were said to amount to two hundred thousand. *Tarsus* itself, soon after surrendered to *Nicephorus*, who pursued his design of peopling the places he conquered with *Christians*, and expelling the *Moslems* from them. This city being the birth place of the great *St. Paul*, became the peculiar object of his attention in this respect. He permitted the *Moslem* inhabitants to retire to *Antioch*, and a colony of *Christians* was transplanted to *Tarsus*, where they converted the chief mosque into a stable, and adorned that city with many noble buildings and fortifications.

The conquests of *Nicephorus*, who soon after returned to *Rebel-Constantinople*, had a very bad effect upon the affairs of *Saifodawla*. One of his officers, called *Rashik*, found means to form a party against him, amongst those *Moslems* who had retired to *Antioch*, and it grew so strong that he declared himself a sovereign; and marched at the head of an army, to besiege *Aleppo*. *Saifodawla* happened then to be at *May-yafarakin*, and notwithstanding the vast blows he had received, he acted with great intrepidity and wisdom. He sent *Bashara*, one of his generals, with an army to strengthen *Curuba*, whom he had left governor of *Aleppo*, and they having effected, without any loss, a junction of the forces, totally defeated *Rashik*. This rebellion being thus quench'd, *Saifodawla* was enabled to take the city of *Kalat* from his rebellious general, *Naja*, whom he took and cut off his head.

Those successes appear to have re-established the fortunes of *Saifodawla*. Notwithstanding all his various difficulties, he still continued to be the patron and encourager of men of genius; and the dispositions of the *Arabs* in favour of poetry, is well exemplified in the instance of *Motanabbi*, who distinguished himself above all his contemporaries, in *Arabic* poetry, and was one of the principal ornaments of *Saifodawla's* court. This person, was the son of a *Cusian* waterman, but became so thoroughly enraptured by the charms of the muses, that he took himself to be divinely inspired; and upon the strength of that, he actually set up for a prophet. To so incredible a pitch of enthusiasm may men arrive when they ramble after extraordinary perfections. Many of the tribes of the *Arabs*, most of whom are tinctured with the like madness, looked upon him as a real prophet; and he soon acquired so great a following amongst

History of
a prophet
and a po-
et.

A GENERAL HISTORY

Who is
murdered
for his
riches.

Deaths in
the Ham-
dan fami-
ly of Mo-
ezzodaw-
la, and

amongst them, that he became formidable; to *Sulu*, the *Egyptian* governor of *Hems*; who, getting him in his power threw him into prison, and obliged him to forego his prophetic pretensions. But notwithstanding the extream jealousy of the eastern courts upon such occasions, such was their veneration for an eminent poet, that he immediately recovered his liberty, and pursued the same way of life, with his great predecessor and countryman, *Omar*; but with very different fortune. For he travelled from court to court, and was well received in all. *Saifodawla* heaped upon him riches and honours, as did the califfs of *Egypt* and *Persia*; and he moved from place to place, with a most magnificent equipage, carrying along with him all his family, and his treasures. But at last, paying a visit to *Bagdad*, being determined to spend the remainder of his life at *Cufa*, the place of his nativity; he was on account of his riches, attacked by some *Arab* robbers, near that city, upon the banks of the *Tygris*, and though he and his son bravely defended themselves and their properties, both of them lost their lives, and left the villains in possession of their sacrilegious plunder. *Abu Hatem*, another celebrated Moslem poet, died about the same time.

The *Hamdan* family, now the most powerful of any in the East, received several terrible blows, about the 356th year of the Hejra. In that year *Moezzodawla*, who had been about twenty-two years the acting *Emir Al Omra*, died. He was thought to be naturally rash and hot; but he had corrected those defects, by a long course of experience; and had arrived to all the accomplishments of a great prince. Upon his death bed, he seemed to be very penitent, for the errors of his past life; he left great part of his wealth to charitable uses, and he gave freedom to all his slaves. He had in an encounter, lost one of his hands, and he kept up, by means of running-footmen, who were incredibly swift; a constant correspondence with *Rokmadawla*, his brother, and the other princes of the *Hamdan* family. He was succeeded by his son, who obtained the epithet of *Azzodawla*; that is, the strength of the court; but he was far inferior to his father, in every respect: and soon lost his influence with the *Moslems*.

saifodaw

His death was succeeded by that of *Saifodawla*, whose character we have already described. We have little more to add to it, than that he died of a strangury, about the 55th year of his age. Notwithstanding the various reverses of his fortune, he never desisted from encouraging, to the utmost of his power, men of learning and genius. *Abulfeda*, the Moslem historian, gives an instance of this, for he tells us, that one *Al Katel*, an author of great eminence; having been fifty years employed in composing a single treatise, *Saifodawla* made him a present of a thousand dinars for a copy of it; but with an apology, that his circum-

stances

stances did not permit him to reward him with a sum more adequate to the work.

The *Hamdan* family, before the close of this year, received another terrible blow in the person of *Nasserodawla*. This prince laid the death of his brother *Saifodawla* so much to heart, that being otherwise of no very pliable temper, he indulged himself, in a kind of an excess of fury against all about him, so that he became quite insufferable. This produced a conspiracy, in which *Fatima*, one of his wives, and his sons, *Abu Taglab*, and *Abul Baracat*, were concerned; and at the request of his grandees, *Nasserodawla* was, by *Taglab*, confined to the castle of *Ardman*, near his capital, *Mawfel*. *Nasserodawla*, upon his confinement, where he was but very indifferently treated, recovered sense enough to write a letter to his third son, *Hamdan*, on whom he had bestowed an independent principality, complaining of his usage, and desiring him to march at the head of his troops to his relief. This letter was intercepted by *Abu Taglab*, and the other son, upon which *Nasserodawla* was removed to another castle, where he was more closely confined than before; and soon after died. Upon his death a bloody war was carried on amongst the three sons; *Abul Baracat* was defeated and killed by *Hamdan*, who made himself master of his dominions, and he in his turn was defeated and dispossessed of all he had by *Abu Taglab*. Nor did the other branches of that illustrious family enjoy a greater degree of tranquility or happiness. The great *Saifodawla* was succeeded by a son, who assumed the same name. But in the year 357, he met with an opposition from *Abu Faras*, the governor of *Hems*, whom *Saifodawla* drove from thence to *Sadad*; he was pursued thither by the first *Saifodawla*'s general *Carubah*, the same who had defeated *Rakish*, and he now defeated and put *Abu Faras* to death; but if this *Abu Faras* was the same whom the first *Saifodawla* redeemed from *Constantinople*, authors differ with regard to his fate; for he is said to have died soon after his return to *Aleppo*. Be this as it will, it is certain, *Carubah*, like almost all the other successful generals of those countries and times, rebelled against his master, whom he drove from *Aleppo*, and took possession of that city. But the *Greeks*, about the same time, making another successful irruption into the Moslem territories, made themselves masters of the castle of *Area*, and then advanced to *Hems*, within the district of *Aleppo*, and took and burnt it; all the inhabitants having before abandoned it. From thence they proceeded against *Antioch*, which they took, and put many of the inhabitants to the sword; but we do not find, that they were able to make themselves masters of the citadel. Another division of them laid siege to *Aleppo*, and obliged *Carubah* to retire into the castle, where he was obliged to purchase his safety by agreeing

Nasserodawla confined by his son *Abu Taglab*,

and dies.

War amongst his sons.

Rebellion of *Carubah*.

Antioch taken by the *Greeks*.

agreeing to pay an annual tribute to the *Greeks*; and giving hostages for the punctual performance of the same. The second *Saifodawla* remained all this time at *Hamah*, and there is reason for believing that some provision was made for him in the late compromise, between *Carubah* and the *Greeks*. For we perceive that very soon after that transaction, *Saifodawla* was prayed for by *Carubah's* order, through all the mosques of *Aleppo* and *Hems*.

Great
conquests
of the
Greeks.

All those events happened while *Nicephorus* was emperor of *Constantinople*. According to the Moslem historians themselves, he was the scourge of their empire, and conquered all the sea-coast parts of *Syria*, and ravaged all the rich neighbourhood of the *Euphrates*. Perhaps he might have made an entire conquest of them, and re-annexed them in a permanent manner to the empire, but the misfortune of his government was the same as that of the califf's had been, his successful generals caballed and rebelled against him, and upon his return from his glorious expedition into *Syria*, he was murdered in his palace.

History of
the con-
quests of
Egypt by
Al Moezz
the califf
of *Kair-*
wan.

A new revolution, or rather a total alteration of the Moslem system, happened about the same time, in the eastern parts. Upon the death of *Cusa*, the tyrant of *Egypt*, that people weakened themselves so much by their civil dissensions, that *Al Moezz* the califf of *Kairwan*, formed a design of conquering it. We have already seen that those califfs pretending to be descended from the famous *Ali*, had acquired vast power in the western parts of the empire; and still looked upon themselves as rightful sovereigns of all the Moslem dominions in *Europe*. The califfs of *Spain*, however, paid but little regard to this claim; but the governors of *Sicily* were still appointed, by the *Fatimate* califfs, for so those of *Kairwan* were called, because descended from *Fatima* the daughter of *Mahomet*, and wife of *Ali*. One *Abul Kasem* was his governor of *Sicily*, at the time of his attempt upon *Egypt*. As the *Sicilian Moslems* were then very powerful by sea, *Al Moezz* gave the command of the fleet to *Abul Kasem*, and *Jawher* a *Greek* renegade, who had been a slave, but was a general of consummate abilities, commanded his land forces. The reader is to observe, that besides the other names of the *African* califfs, they are likewise called *Magrabian* califfs, because of their vicinity to the country of the *Magrabians*, or the western parts of *Arabia*, from whence they drew their bravest men, and were originally descended. This *Al Moezz*, well knew that armies alone, which he was to transport, through infinite difficulties, to great distances, were not sufficient to establish his conquests, and therefore he set up a much more effectual title, that of being the rightful iman, or high priest of the *Moslems*, as being descended from *Ali*, in whom all authority, both civil and ecclesiastical, was vested. This device wonderfully

wonderfully contributed to his successes. For *Jawhar*, the *Magrabian* general, partly through his religious prepossession, and partly through the civil dissensions of the *Egyptians*, found little or no resistance into that country. He marched directly to *Meser*, and one of the most celebrated Moslem priests publicly prayed in the chief mosque there, for *Al Moezz*, as a true successor of the prophet *Mahomet*, without any mention of *Al Moti*, the califf of *Bagdad*, whose authority, as chief iman, had been still recognized by the *Egyptians* in all their mosques, by naming him in their public prayers. This happened in the month of *August*, and the 358th year of the *Hejra*, and *Jawhar*, in a very short time, made himself master of all that noble country. All the opposition he met with was from *Al Hasan*, who commanded a body of troops at *Al Ramla* in *Palestine*. But *Al Hasan* was soon overthrown by *Jaafar*, a *Magrabian* general, who sent him and many of his principal officers prisoners to *Al Moezz*. That prince still continued in *Kairwan*, 'till *Aabar* could compleat his conquest of *Egypt*, which he not only did with very little difficulty, but built a city since called *Grand Cairo*, upon the banks of the *Nile*, which his soldiers inhabited, the better to bridle the country; and which is since become the capital of *Egypt*. Upon the defeat of *Al Hasan*, *Al Ramla* submitted to the arms of the *Fatemite* califf, as did *Tiberias*, and many other places of that country; the inhabitants taking an oath of fidelity to *Al Moezz*.

His general founds *Grand Cairo*.

The conquest of *Egypt* being thus in a manner compleated, by *Jawhar*, and the other *Magrabian* generals; *Jaafar* marched with a strong body of troops into *Syria*, and demanded the people of *Damascus*, to swear fidelity to the *Fatemite* califf. But the *Damascenes*, in hopes of being supported by the *Karmatians*, refused to comply with the summons; so that *Jaafar* was obliged to storm and plunder the city. Soon after, it rebelled, but *Jaafar* subdued them a second time, and forced them to take an oath of fidelity to the *Fatemite* califf. This great conquest was followed by the reduction of all the places in *Syria*, as well as in *Egypt*, that had been held by the family of *Al Ashid*; and so compleatly did *Al Moezz* conquer, that he was prayed for by name, in all the mosques, of *Syria* and *Arabia*, as well as of *Egypt*, without any mention being made of *Al Moti*, the *Syrian* califf, excepting at *Mecca* alone.

Syria conquered by him.

The natural inconstancy, however, of the people of his new conquests, was a great abatement to his success. The *Karmatians* declared for the remains of the family of *Al Ashid*, who were still numerous, and, in some places, powerful; and found means to assassinate *Jaafar*, the *Fatemite* governor of *Damascus*. By this *Jawhar* not only lost that city, but *Al Ramla* likewise; and all the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, declared for *Al Ashid's* family. They then

Inconstancy of the *Egyptians*.

invaded *Egypt* itself, and gave battle to *Jawhar*, at a place called *Ain Al Shems*, one of those cities which the antients distinguished by *Heliopolis*, or the city of the *Sun*. The impetuosity of the *Karmatians* in the beginning of the battle, which was very bloody, was so great, that they carried all who were before them, and thought themselves sure of a compleat victory, when *Al Jawhar* charged them so vigorously, by the with a fresh body of *Magrarians*, and *Egyptians*, that they same general were utterly defeated, and forced to retreat to *Syria*.

This great victory, which, we are told, was obtained in the 360th year of the *Hejra*, seems to have determined *Al Moezz* to march from *Al Modia*, the capital of *Kairwan*, to take possession of his new empire in *Egypt* and *Syria*. He who takes had for two years before been making prodigious preparations for that purpose. He ordered all his coin and bullion of *Egypt*, to be melted down to ingots of the form of mill-stones, and of the same largeness; so that each ingot was a sufficient load for a camel. This account must appear incredible to any reader, who does not consider the vast masses of wealth, which those califfs, when they met with success, used to heap up. Perhaps, however, some art might have been made use of by *Al Moezz*, on this occasion, that he might strike his new subjects with the great opinion of his power and riches. It is however, certain, that he made his entry into *Egypt* with inexpressible pomp and splendour, attended by a great number of camels, with their golden loadings. By this time, *Jawhar* had made himself master of *Alexandria*, and all the *Egyptian* nobility were assembled there, and received their new master with the most profound marks of submission and respect. From thence he went to *Mefer*, and to *Al Fostat*, and at last he visited the new city of *Cairo*, which signifies the victorious, because it had been founded by *Jawhar*, under a favourable horiscope, when *Mars* was in the ascendant. Through all the places *Al Moezz* went, orders were given to suppress the name of *Al Moti* in the public prayers.

with vast pomp.
He is prayed for as the true iman
But though the imans, and those who officiated in the mosques, were obliged to comply with this order, yet it was far from being generally well received. The califfs of the house of *Al Abbas* were vastly respected, even by the followers of *Ali*, and had of late done a great deal to oblige them. It was therefore with great reluctance, that the *Egyptians* and *Syrians* in general, complied with this commission; nor could the new subjects of *Al Moezz*, at all brook the vast state with which he demanded to be treated. The fate of *Hain*, an *Andalusian* poet, but an *Arab* by original, was some proof of this. *Al Moezz* had brought him along with him in his retinue to sing his victories, and to celebrate his praises. But the bard, it seems, was too profuse of the incense he offered to his master upon this occasion; and not contented to celebrate him as a great monarch,

march, and a conqueror, he made him a divinity. This His poet gave vast offence to the orthodox *Moslems*, who looked upon the poet as a blasphemer, and he was, probably upon that account, murdered by an unknown hand, at *Barka*. The progress of *Al Moezz* was, without doubt, greatly owing to the wars that still continued between the *Greeks*, and the subjects of the califfat. The former made an irruption into *Armenia*, where they were guilty of great ravages. They likewise took *Nasibin*, and penetrated into *Diya Rabia*. *Nicephorus* was then dead, and the *Greeks*, though numerous, were but weakly commanded. *Abu Taglab*, the son of *Naterodawl*, was then in possession of that fine province, and he sent his brother *Habitallah*, to oppose the invaders. *Habitallah*, accordingly, having received all his reinforcements, attacked the *Greek* army near *Amida*, in ground where they could make no advantage of superiority of force; and gave them an entire defeat, making prisoners of most of their army, and of their general; who died in his confinement. The *Greeks* defeated.

In the mean while, *Baktyar*, the son of the late *Moezzodawl*, continued, after his father, to exercise at *Bagdad* all the high functions of *Emir Al Omra*, but with very unequal abilities. He had a favourite, one *Baki*, whom he made his first minister, and who greatly disgusted the commanders of the *Turkish* and *Deylamite* troops, who continued to domineer at *Bagdad*. The irruptions of the *Greeks*, had driven into that city a vast number of *Moslem* subjects, who were stript of their all; and the *Greek* troops, before their late defeat, had threatened *Bagdad* itself. *Baktyar*, finding that the army refused to move without their pay, repaired to the califf, and demanded such a sum as was sufficient to put them in motion. It was in vain for the poor califf to plead his inability, his poverty, his subjection, to an insolent soldiery, and the disgraceful, disagreeable circumstances he was under, which rendered his situation more undesirable than that of any private subject. The *Emir* replied with great insolence, that if he would not part with his money willingly, he must be forced, and the califf, who was now old and infirm, agreed to sell all the effects he was possessed of, which amounted to no more than about two thousand pounds sterling; which *Baktyar* immediately squandered upon his pleasures; the danger probably being over by the late defeat of the *Greeks*, near *Amida*. The history of the deposition of *Al Moti*.

This insolence, which left the califf destitute, almost of the necessaries of life, while his *Emir Al Omra* was dissipating in intemperance the vast revenue of his own dominions, gave great disgust to the public; but especially to the *Turkish* troops. In order to find them employment, he undertook an expedition into *Abwaz*, which was part of his own dominions; he thought this was a proper opportunity for bringing his *Turkish* soldiers back to a sense of their duty;

he therefore treated them with great haughtiness, and kept them under strict discipline. But upon his arrival at *Waset*, in his return to *Bagdad*, he understood that one of the *Turkish* officers, whom he had punished with vast severity, if not injustice, by stripping him of his estate, had rebelled against him, and having assembled the *Turkish* troops, who had been left in that capital, or its neighbourhood, was preparing to oppose him. The name of this *Turkish* officer was *Sabetekin*, who having defeated the troops under *Baktyar*, and likewise such of the inhabitants of *Bagdad*, as still adhered to *Al Moti* and his *Emir Al Omra*, made himself master of that city, and pillaged *Baktyar*'s palace there. As to *Al Moti* himself, he was quite disabled, by age and infirmities, from taking any part in this dispute, and being now in the hands of *Sabetekin*, he was persuaded, or rather obliged by him, to resign the califat to his son *Al Tay*. This happened in the 30th year of the nominal califat of *Al Moti*, who was then about sixty-three years of age. As to this califf's character, his virtues were merely passive, he being kept, during all his reign, in thralldom, by the family of *Buya*. We are however told, that he was modest, religious, charitable, and that he was of a mild and agreeable disposition.

The califf
abdicates.

*Al Tay, the son of Al Moti, the twenty-fourth califf
of the house of Al Abbas.*

He is suc-
ceeded by
his son *Al
Tay*.

THIS new califf was above forty years of age when he was raised to the throne. He was, like many of the late califfs, no other than a pupil to the *Emir Al Omra*, which post he was forced to confer upon his benefactor *Sabetekin*. The new *Emir Al Omra* found himself under great difficulties, because *Baktyar* still maintained his ground at *Waset*, with a numerous army; and *Sabetekin* perceived that it was absolutely necessary to reduce him. The more effectually to do that, he set out with an army from *Bagdad*, but carried along with him the old califf *Al Moti*, as well as the reigning califf, that their presence might give a sanction to his arms. But when they had advanced to *Dair Al Akul*, which lay about five leagues from *Bagdad*, and was the seat of the Christian bishop of the *Arabs*, *Al Moti* died, as did *Sabetekin*, of a diarrhæa, about two months after the abdication of *Al Moti*, at the same time and place.

Who

names the
*Turk Af-
tekin* to be

The *Turkish* soldiers immediately chose one *Al Aftekin*, for their general, and *Al Tay* nominated him to the place of *Emir Al Omra*. *Al Aftekin* had served with great reputation,

tion, under *Moezzodawla*, and he lost no time in proceeding his *Emir* to *Waset*, where he shut up *Baktyar*, and besieged him with *Al Omra*. uncommon vigour for fifty days. Upon this occasion, *Al Aftekin* depended for his success, chiefly upon the presence and authority of the califf *Al Tay*; as *Baktyar*, whose true name was *Azzodawla*, did upon the princes of the house of *Hamdan*, of which he was a branch. Those princes *The Hamdan family* continued still to be very powerful. Old *Rokuadawla* was still alive, and he, or his son *Adadodawla*, was in possession ly assist of almost all *Persia*. *Abu Taglab* was equally powerful, *Baktyar*. being now in full possession, not only of all the dominions left him by his father, but many others. Those princes however, were at a great distance from *Waset*, and each had his own interest so much at heart, that it was not easy to prevail with them, to march to the relief of their cousin *Baktyar*. The latter, however, wrote the most earnest letters from *Waset*, to *Adadodawla*, whom he in a manner invited to come to his relief, by promising to resign to him his power and interest, sooner than submit to the *Turks*. This magnificent offer prevailed with *Adadodawla*, so that he soon raised an army, and made very quick marches to *Waset*. But *Baktyar* had, at the same time, prevailed upon *Abu Taglab*, the son of *Neserodawla*, to march with all manner of expedition to *Bagdad*; which he made himself master of, before *Al Aftekin* knew any thing of the matter. For judging that he was not able to encounter *Adadodawla*, he immediately raised the siege of *Waset*, and marched with his troops towards *Bagdad*, which he found *Abu Taglab* possessed of. The name of the califf, however, being still of great use, he summoned *Abu Taglab* to deliver up the city, which he had seized upon in his own right. The summons being rejected, *Al Aftekin* and his *Turks*, made so sudden an impression upon the place, that they carried it sword in hand. *Al Aftekin takes Bagdad.* All this time, *Adadodawla*, having taken possession of *Waset*, made long marches to relieve *Abu Taglab*, who still maintained his ground in the neighbourhood of *Bagdad*, and their two armies having effected a junction, they, in their turns, formed the siege of *Bagdad*. As this capital was, properly speaking, composed of two cities, one on the eastern, the other on the western bank of the *Tygris*, *Adadodawla* undertook the investure of the former, as did *Baktyar* that of the latter. To besiege a city in the East, at that time, especially a great one, was the same as to take it, unless it was defended by a number of troops, equal or superior to that of the besiegers. The *Turks* abandoned the defence of *Bagdad*; but in their retreat they were followed by the combined army, who forced them to a battle; and after a most bloody contest, defeated them, at *Dair Al Akul*. By this victory, the princes of the *Hamdan* family came to the possession, not only of *Bagdad*, but of the califf's person, and the *Turkish* camp.

Al Aftekin
takes
Bagdad.

Hej. 364.
A.D. 974.
but is
forced to
fly and is
defeated.

Intrigues
of *Adado-*
dawla.

Who im-
prisoned
Baktyar
and his
brothers.

He is ob-
liged by
his father
to resign
his power.

Death and
character
of *Rocna-*
dawla.

Baktyar and *Adadodawla* were now in a kind of joint command. But ambition soon interposed, and *Adadodawla* proved the abler politician. The troops of *Baktyar* mutinied for their pay, and were extremely insolent to their commander, who was obliged to apply to *Adadodawla* for assistance. That prince, upon this occasion, acted with profound dissimulation. He caressed the people of *Bagdad*, where he obliged his troops to observe a most strict discipline, and restored *Al Tay* to his palace, where he was the first to recognize his sovereignty, by prostration, and kissing his hands. He likewise restored him to his revenue, and even added to his income, and treated him with all imaginable respect. Having, by those means, rendered himself popular at *Bagdad*, he advised *Baktyar* to leave to him the care of reducing his troops to their duty, and in the mean while to divest himself of his command; all which the other was obliged to comply with. But soon after, being with his brother invited to an entertainment by *Adadodawla*, the latter made them all prisoners.

This perfidious conduct made *Adadodawla* entire master of *Baktyar's* dominions, and of the post of *Emir Al Omra*, which belonged properly to *Baktyar*, and he omitted no means, by increasing the equipages and splendor of the califf's living, to secure himself in the possession of his power. *Azadowla* had a son, *Marzaban*, who was then governor of *Basra*, and he no sooner understood how his father was treated, than he complained in the most bitter terms to *Rocnadawla*, the father of *Adadodawla*. This old prince, ashamed and enraged at his son, fell into a fit of passion that was little short of distraction. *Adadodawla* endeavoured to appease his father, by shewing him the importance of his acquisition, and by offering to give *Baktyar* some compensation. But *Rocnadawla* was deaf to all proposals of that kind, and treated the messengers and ambassadors of his son, with the utmost indignation, even threatening to cut them in pieces, and charging them to tell his son that, if he did not immediately comply with his orders in restoring *Baktyar* to his liberty and his possessions, he would in person march at the head of an army, to chastise him. Though *Rocnadawla*, was at this time very old, yet his son knew him too well to dispute his commands. He immediately freed *Baktyar* and his brother, from their confinement, and replaced him in his post of *Emir Al Omra*. But before he left *Bagdad*, he obliged them and the califf to swear, not to oppose his will, or that of his father. Soon after this transaction, which happened in the 365th year of the Hejra, old *Rocnadawla* died, in full possession of power, glory and reputation, as a brave, a just, and a magnanimous prince. Before his death, he divided his large dominions amongst the three sons who survived him, and enjoined them to unity amongst themselves. But *Adadodawla*, the eldest, be-
ing

ing mindful of his enmity with *Baktyar*, gave a loose to that resentment, which he had been obliged to stifle in his father's life time, and immediately marched an army into *Al-waz*, where *Baktyar's* paternal dominions lay. *Akwaz* collected together all his force, and taking with him, as usual, the califf, he came to a battle with *Adadodawla*; but being defeated, he fled first to *Waset*, and then to *Bagdad*, where he shut himself up.

Adadodawla, being thus left in possession of the field, soon made himself master of *Baktyar's* dominions, and of *Basra* itself. But, as he was possessed of the most unbounded ambition, he did not stop there. He had formed a plan for uniting, in his own person, all the possessions of the *Hamdan* or *Buya* family, and he had abilities to execute it. He had all the capacity of the princes of that house; and, like them, was a generous encourager of learning, and not only an author but a critic in poetry, the favourite entertainment of eastern courts. But with all those excellencies, he was dissembling, and treacherous to the last degree. As his court was open to every man of merit, in every branch of art and literature, it was crowded with such. Amongst others who resided there, was one *Mozawwer*, or the Crook backed Forger, called from his figure and profession, which was that of imitating any man's hand, to such perfection, that the forgery was not discernable, even by the writer, whose hand was forged. *Adadodawla* availed himself, to very wicked purposes, of this artist, for he kept him constantly employed in forging letters of princes and ministers, by which he kept all his neighbours at so constant a variance amongst themselves, that no confederacy could be formed, powerful enough to check his ambition. *Baktyar*, on the other hand, though ambitious and wicked, was insolent, and void of art; and so devoted to his pleasures, that he was continually poor, which was the source of all his misfortunes. He is particularly famous for his bodily strength, which was so great, that it was said he could encounter a lion, and throw a bull upon his back.

The 367th year of the Hejra, was opened with the siege of *Bagdad*, by *Adadodawla*. That politic prince knew how useful dissimulation was, upon certain occasions, and he affected a vast reluctance to come to extremities with his kinsman *Baktyar*. He offered to put him in quiet possession of part of his dominions, and to suffer him to reside in any city within them, excepting *Mawfel*, if he would deliver up *Bagdad*, and his post of *Emir Al Omra*. At the same time, to shew his superiority, he sent *Baktyar* a robe; which the latter wore, perhaps, because it came from the head of the elder branch of the *Buya* family. He did not however, think fit to comply with *Adadodawla's* proposal; but perceiving himself unable to hold out *Bagdad*, he retired from thence to *Al Heditha*. Upon his retreat, *Adadodawla* took possession

*Adado-
dawla*
defeats
and be-
sieves
Baktyar
in *Bag-
dad*,
and takes
Basra.
His cha-
racter,
virtues
and vices.

Baktyar
forced to
leave
Bagdad.

sion of *Bagdad*, with the person of the califf, and ordered *Baki*, the first minister under *Baktyar*, to be put to an ignominious death. In all other respects he acted as the sovereign of his sovereign. For he obliged *Al Tay* to give him the post of *Emir Al Omra*, with two imperial standards, as badges of his authority, and the entire management of his person and family. He likewise ordered his name to be mentioned in the public prayers, and a drum was beat every morning before his palace; all which innovations, the califf and his *Moslems* at *Bagdad*, were forced to submit to.

His agree- In the mean while, *Baktyar*, at *Al Haditha*, met with a
ment with prince of the *Buya* family, in circumstances similar to his
and trea- own. This was *Hamdan*, the son of *Naserodawla*, whom
chery to his brother *Abu Tagleb*, as has been already observed, had
Hmdan. driven from his possessions. As both he and *Baktyar* still
had friends and followers, and likewise correspondents, it
was agreed, that each should be assistant to the other. Both
of them seem, however, to have been betrayed by those
about them; for *Adadodawla* discovered a correspondence
between *Baktyar*, and one *Ibrahim*, who resided at *Bagdad*,
and the latter was immediately thrown into prison, for having
pointed out to his master the means of being restored. *Adado-
dawla*, notwithstanding, had magnanimity enough afterwards
to restore *Ibrahim* to his liberty. As to *Hamdan*, his brother
Abu Tagleb, came to the knowledge of the agreement made
between him and *Baktyar*, and in order to disconcert it, he
offered to assist *Baktyar* with a body of troops, provided he
would immediately put into his hands his brother *Hamdan*.
Baktyar was mean enough to comply with this proposal, and
sent *Hamdan* a prisoner to *Abu Tagleb*, who immediately
joined *Baktyar*, with twenty thousand men; and proceeded
towards *Bagdad*.

Baktyar *Adadodawla* was provided to receive them, and leaving
killed. *Bagdad*, he marched with an army towards *Tecrit*, and, in
Abu Tag- the neighbourhood of that place, a battle was fought be-
lab put to tween him and the confederate princes, which ended in the
flight. defeat of the latter. *Baktyar* was taken prisoner, and his
head, by *Adadodawla*'s orders, was struck off, and carried to
the conqueror, who is said to have shed tears at the sight of
it. As to *Abu Tagleb*, he was pursued out of the field of
battle, and hunted from place to place, 'till taking refuge
in the dominions of the *Greek* emperor, he gave him a de-
feat upon the same spot, where the fourth *Parthian* legion
of the *Romans* had been once stationed; but then received
its name from *Zyad*, the famous *Arab Moslem*. From
thence *Abu Tagleb* removed to *Amida*.

Greatness of *Adado-* *Adadodawla*, was at this time justly considered as the most
dawla. powerful prince of the East; for, after taking *Mayasarakin*,
which had belonged to *Abu Tagleb*, he became master of all
the possessions of the house of *Hamdan*, excepting those
that were left to his brothers, which included all *Persia*.

A rebellion

A rebellion at this time broke out in that part of *Mesopotamia*, which still belonged to the empire, under *Bardas Sclerus*, one of the *Greek* generals, who assumed the imperial purple. This *Sclerus* was the celebrated general, who, His policy towards *Sclerus*. had at the head of no more than thirty thousand men, routed an immense number of barbarians, called indiscriminately, by the *Greek* historians, *Russes*, who had broken into the empire. But having been stript of his command by *Basilus*, an eunuch, and a general likewise of great merit, under the emperor *Zemisses*, he out of resentment proclaimed himself emperor, and defeated *Phocas* the imperial general, under *Basilus*, then emperor of *Constantinople*, with a vast slaughter. After this, he made himself master of *Antioch*, Who defeats the *Greek* generals; but being himself defeated, he flies to *Bagdad*, but the inhabitants of that city, by the persuasion of their patriarch, expelled his governor, and declared for the emperor; who, during the late distractions of the califat, had repossessed himself of that city. Upon this, *Sclerus*, who seems to have had a great many *Moslem* officers in his army, sent *Babram* to chastise them. But all he could do, was only to ravage the adjacent territory, and to carry off with him a vast booty in cattle, the *Antiochians* having refused him admittance. *Sclerus*, unable at that time to take *Antioch*, and understanding that great preparations were making against him by the emperor, applied by his ambassadors, with great presents, to *Adadodawla*, at *Bagdad*, for his assistance. That politic prince did not fail to promise it in the most ample manner, and actually ordered a large body of troops to march to his assistance; but this was done with so much deliberation, that they did not come up time enough to be of service to *Sclerus*. According to the *Greek* historians, he had, in the mean time, fought two battles, with *Leo*, and *Phocas*, two imperial generals, and defeated them both. But the latter having received reinforcements, defeated *Sclerus* in his turn, in a great battle fought upon the plains of *Pançalca*, and obliged him to fly, with a few cavalry, to *Mayafarakin*, the same place which *Adadodawla* had some time before taken from *Abu Tagleb*. Here he and his son, who attended him, with three hundred horse, were received by the governor, as a prince in alliance with *Adadodawla*, who well knew how to turn the misfortunes of others to his own advantage. On this occasion, his dissimulation was exquisite. He sent a private order to the governor of *Mayafarakin*, to secure *Sclerus*; but intimated, at the same time, to where he the governor, that he was not to be surprized, if he, *Adadodawla*, should afterwards disown the order. The governor, in compliance with his master, sent *Sclerus*, with his son, and attendants, under a guard to *Bagdad*. Here *Sclerus* was received with the utmost politeness by *Adadodawla*, who exclaimed against the inhospitable treatment of his governor, and assigned to *Sclerus* a magnificent house, and told

told him, that he had liberty to divert himself in *Medida*, an island formed by the *Tygris*, as often as he pleased. This information was sufficient to convince *Sclerus* that he was in no better than a splendid prison, and the more so, as he found none was to converse with him, but by particular permission of *Adadodawla*, who, notwithstanding all this, continued to visit *Sclerus*, and to make him the most magnificent promises of restoring him to his dignity, as soon as certain reasons of state would give him leave; with all which *Sclerus* seemed to be perfectly satisfied.

*Adado-
dawla's
dissimula-
tion.*

In the mean while, *Adadodawla* was treating with the imperial court, and gave *Basilus* his option of peace or war. If he chose the former, he was to deliver up all the acquisitions, which the *Greeks* had of late made upon the Moslem territories, in which case, *Sclerus* was to be delivered into his hands. If that proposal was rejected, *Adadodawla* threatened to put *Sclerus* at the head of an army, sufficient to place him upon the throne of *Constantinople*. This negotiation was the true reason why *Sclerus* was so narrowly watched. He was as great a politician as *Adadodawla* himself; and in his frequent conferences with that prince, he had found out the weak parts of his character, which were, an implicit belief in judicial astrology, and suspicion of all who approached him. The imperial court, surrounded as it was at that time, did not long hesitate upon the part they were to act. They dispatched one *Nicephorus* as ambassador to *Adadodawla*, with rich presents, and instructions to conclude a peace at any rate, with that *Emir*. This transaction soon became so public, that it came to the ears of *Sclerus* himself, nor did *Adadodawla* make any secret, that a *Greek* ambassador was come to his court. *Sclerus* rightly judging what the nature of his commission was, plied *Adadodawla* upon his weak side with so much address, as to persuade him, that the *Greek* ambassador had a secret order from his master to poison him. Upon this, *Adadodawla*, before *Nicephorus* could have a public audience, threw him and all his attendants into a dungeon, where he kept them for nine years, and seized all the presents they had brought, either for himself or the califf.

Who is
outwitted
by *Sclerus*.

*Adado-
dawla
made
king of
kings.*

Reflection

Adadodawla was now arrived to such a pitch of greatness, that the califf himself was prevailed with to publish an edict, enjoining his name to be mentioned in the public prayers, and drums to be beat before his palace. As he was in possession of *Persia*, he had the vanity to obtain from the califf, a renewal of the antient title of the *Persian* monarchs, before the time of *Alexander the Great*; that of *Skaen Shah*, or king of kings. By this title he was mentioned in all the public prayers, and from him the title of *Shah*, has descended to the kings of *Persia*, who wear it to this very time. By this curious circumstance we may form some idea of the light in which the *Moslems* in the East, at this time considered

sidered the califf of *Bagdad*. His real force and revenue of his dominions, did not in reality exceed that of the Pope in *Italy*. His dignity appears to have been of the same nature, and the treatment he received from the Moslem princes, was the same, that their holinesses of *Rome*, have often received from Christian potentates. For, though the califfs, as well as the popes, have been often stript of their dominions, imprisoned and treated with indignity; yet still they were esteemed the fountains of honour to monarchs themselves; and we here see, that *Al Tay*, as insignificant as his power was, could bestow upon another, who in one sense was his own subject, the most permanent, as well as magnificent title, that any race of sovereigns ever enjoyed. But asking the reader's pardon, for this digression, if it is one, we are now to proceed in our history.

Adadodawla thought he could not be at the height of his glory, if he was not recognized by his brothers as their sovereign, and he wrote to them upon that head. One of them readily complied, but the other, *Fakrodawla*, answered him in a strain so haughty, that *Adadodawla* marched an army against *Hamadan*, the residence of *Fakrodawla*, who found himself obliged to throw himself under the protection of *Kabus*, the son of *Washmakin*, and prince of *Jorjan* and *Tabrestan*, who received him with great marks of friendship and respect. Upon this, *Adadodawla* seized *Hamadan*, and the territories of *Fakrodawla*; and chastised some curds or tribes in *Hasnayab*, for presuming to dispute his will. But while he was intent upon this expedition, he was seized with an apoplectic fit, which for some time gave a prodigious shock to his constitution, both of body and mind.

Adadodawla, when recovered from this disorder, and master of all he could well wish for, returned to *Bagdad*, where he emulated the most magnificent princes in history, in acts of public utility. The walls of *Bagdad*, through the continual convulsions the califat had suffered, were then almost in ruins, but he rebuilt and restored them to their antient strength and splendour; he repaired the mosques and public buildings, which were in the same condition; he cleared, enlarged, or deepened the channels of rivers; he formed canals, encouraged planting and agriculture; and above all, he expended vast sums in pensions to learned men, and in alms to poor people, who had no other place of residence but the mosques. One part of his ambition remained still to be gratified, and that was, of becoming ancestor to a race of future califfs; and for this purpose he perswaded the califf *Al Tay*, to marry his daughter, and to settle upon her a dowry of one hundred thousand dinars. In short, the fame of *Adadodawla*, reached the most barbarous and remote parts of the califat, and we are told, that the prince of *Yaman*, or *Arabia the Happy*, this year sent him, amongst other rich presents, a piece of amber, weighing fifty-six *Bagdad* pounds.

His wars
with his
brother.

Was seiz-
ed with
an apo-
plectic fit.
His great
works.

He mar-
ries his
daughter
to the ca-
liff.

Remark-
able spirit
in his em-
bassador.

We have already seen how that *Fakrodawla*, *Adadodawla*'s brother, had taken refuge with *Kabus* of *Tabrestan*, who generously entertained him; and this drew the powerful indignation of *Adadodawla* upon his dominions. At first he offered to treat with him, provided he would deliver up *Fakrodawla*. But not being able to succeed in that, he persuaded the califf to give his brother *Moarwiyadawla*, the investiture of the dominions of *Jorjan*, and *Tabrestan*, as being their supreme lord. From this circumstance we learn, that the califfs of *Bagdad* had not, as yet, given up their temporal supremacy, but still retained it, at least in name. *Moarwiyadawla* being thus, in point of interest, engaged to the califf's service, he was entrusted with the chief command of the army that was raised against *Washmakin*; who was entirely defeated, and his territories bestowed upon *Moarwiyadawla*. *Adadodawla* did not long survive this conquest. He was so weakened, by repeated epileptical fits, that, during intervals, he appears to have been insane in his judgment. Amongst the last civil actions of his life, was an embassy which he sent by one *Al Bakelain*, so called, because his father had been a bean-seller, to *Constantinople*, either to expostulate with that emperor, or to apologize for his own conduct. *Bakelain*, when introduced to his audience, was ordered to make his reverence before his imperial majesty, which he flatly refused to do. The point was difficult; it was dangerous to provoke *Adadodawla*, in the person of his minister, and the reverence was indispensable to the emperor's grandeur. The imperial ministers therefore contrived, that the next audience which the Moslem ambassador was to receive, should be in a room, where the door was so low, that he could not enter it without stooping; and this was to be interpreted, as doing reverence to the emperor. But the penetrating *Moslem*, coming to the door, saw through the design. He entered the room, with his posteriors foremost, and then turning quick, he advanced to the emperor, with a firm and erect posture. This incident seems to have happened but a little before *Adadodawla*'s death; which was occasioned by one of those epileptical fits, to which he was so subject.

Further
accounts
of *Adado-
dawla*.

He died about the forty-eighth year of his age, and was interred in or near the same spot, where the remains of the califf *Ali*, are said to lye. To what we have remarked concerning this great prince, we are to add the following particulars. Few men had ever been more prosperous in their undertakings than he was; and yet his outset in life was so unpromising, that, as we have seen, the army, to the command of which he succeeded by his uncle's adoption, refused to obey him. It is plain, that his being the head of the eldest branch of the *Baya*, family, was the foundation, or rather pretext, for his oppressing the other princes of that house,

and

and of at last taking from them, all their territories; so that at the time of his death, though he was in one sense a subject to the califf; yet he was perhaps, the most powerful prince in the world. Possessed as he was, of all *Persia*, and the title of King of Kings, it is no wonder that the *Greek* historians have called him *Cosroes*, which formerly was a general name for all their kings. After making allowances for that ridiculous veneration for judicial astrology, which infected all the people and princes of the East, he must be considered, as an excellent judge, both of men and learning, without being swayed by vulgar prejudices. As a proof of this, we are told of a physician, one *Nadhif*, His judgment of learned men exemplified. by birth a *Greek*, who was a man of knowledge and merit, in his profession, but esteemed so unfortunate in his practice, that the patients he was called to, looked upon him as the angel of death; so that the reader may easily conceive, that he soon had little, or no practice. Notwithstanding this, *Adadodawla* was so sensible of his abilities, that he employed him as his own physician, and sent him to visit those patients, for whom he had a value. Amongst them, was a general officer, who no sooner saw *Nadhif* approach his bed; than he immediately dispatched a friend to *Adadodawla's* first minister, to acquaint him, that finding he had incurred his master's displeasure, (for he could look upon *Nadhif's* prescription as no other than the sentence of his death), he was willing to banish himself to any part of the world. This message highly diverted *Adadodawla*, when he heard of it, and he sent the patient a magnificent robe, as a mark of his being still in his favour, and that he meant *Nadhif* to visit him, as a token of his respect. The reiterated attacks of the His epilepsy before *Adadodawla's* death, brought him, as we have phrenzy: mentioned, into a state of phrensy, and we are told, that being excessively fond of making verses, he composed some upon himself, in which he was placed upon a level with God Almighty. This blasphemy must have been the effect of his distemper, though the Moslem historians are of opinion, that it was the cause of it; and they observe, that after that, he never had quiet or contentment in his own mind. It is foreign to this history to particularize the learned men, who adorned his court with their residence and compositions, and it would require a volume to enumerate them and their works. While he was dying we are told, that he incessantly faltered out the words, "What does my power or wealth now avail me; my greatness is now at an end."

Having closed the eyes of this great man, we must now attend the public transactions of peace and war, in other parts of the califat, or at least in other parts where the califf still retained the shadow of authority. We have already seen, that *Al Aftekin*, the *Turk*, was driven from *Bagdad*, by the princes of the *Buya* family. His first resort was

History of
*Al Af-
tekin.*

who de-
feats
Jawhar.

Remark.
able pe-
riod of *Al*
Aftekin's
life.

was to *Hems*, which he took possession of, and then he moved to *Damascus*, where the inhabitants groaned under the tyranny of *Zaban*, the *Egyptian* governor, under *Al Moezz*, whom *Al Aftekin* soon expelled. After his expulsion, the *Damascenes* continued their public prayers for *Al Moezz*, who died soon after, and was succeeded by his son *Al Aziz*. This prince sent his general *Jawhar*, to reduce *Damascus*, with an army. *Jawhar*, though one of the most fortunate commanders in his time, found himself too weak to execute his commission. The *Damascenes* defended their city with great vigour against all his attacks, and the *Karmatians*, who were always hovering about like birds of prey, attacked *Jawhar*, whose army had suffered greatly during the siege. He therefore raised it, and drew off his troops, by which the *Damascenes*, the *Turks* under *Al Aftekin*, and the *Karmatians*, joining, formed an army far superior to his; and brought him into such distress, that it was owing either to the avarice, or the generosity of *Al Aftekin*, most probably to the latter, that he was able to return to *Egypt*, with the famished sickly remnants of his army. Some writers say, that *Al Aftekin* was corrupted with a large sum of money; but this is improbable, from the sequel of his history. According to *Al Makin* the historian, the combined armies pursued *Jawhar* as far as *Ramla*, where *Al Aftekin* shut him up, and he and his whole army must have been destroyed, had he not submitted to the mortifying circumstances of marching out of the city, under the sword of *Al Aftekin*, and the lance of *Al Hasan*, the *Karmatian* general. Whatever may be in this, it is certain, that *Al Aziz*, being persuaded by *Jawhar* to undertake an expedition in person against the *Damascenes*, and their allies, he gave them a total defeat near *Al Ramla*; but *Al Aftekin* made his escape, though most of his army was either slain or made prisoners. Upon this, *Al Aziz*, offered a reward of one hundred thousand dinars, to any one who would bring *Al Aftekin* alive, before him. This tempted an *Arab* chieftain, in whose castle *Al Aftekin*, as being his intimate friend, had taken refuge, to betray him; and he brought him alive to the *Fatemite* califf. But *Al Aziz*, was so far from offering him any violence, that he presented him with most magnificent habits, tents, equipages, and household furniture; and *Al Aftekin* ended his days at *Mefer*, which continued, still, to be the capital of *Egypt*, in great prosperity and glory. We are not to forget, that *Al Aziz* likewise restored to their liberty, all the *Turkish* prisoners, who had fought under *Al Aftekin*, at the battle of *Al Ramla*. Some historians say, that he was poisoned thro' *Jawhar's* envy, for which *Al Aziz* threw that general into prison; but found himself soon after obliged to release him. Notwithstanding this success of *Al Aziz*, against the *Damascenes* and their allies, the partizans of the house of *Al Aftekin*

Ashed

Ashed gave him a great deal of trouble. Many battles were fought in the heart of his empire, and he himself was closely besieged in his capital. But being excellently well served by *Jawhar*, both as his general, and minister, he at last proved victorious over all his enemies, and his subjects were reconciled to the colour of white, by which the *Fatimites* were distinguished, in opposition to black, the colour of the house of *Al Abbas*. The other transactions of the califat, *Uncer-* during the period we are now upon, are related with such taint of confused, and many of them with such contradictory, circumstances, both as to persons, and to places, that the whole is a mass of uncertainty, and cannot enter into history. All of consequence to be depended upon, is, that the *Karmatians*, about this time, altered the form of their government, which they committed to the administration of six of their chieftains, or noblemen; and that *Abu Tagleb*, after variety of adventures, was killed by some *Arab* chiefs, who sent his head to *Al Aziz*, not chusing to send him alive, lest he should meet with the same reception as *Al Aftekin* had.

Before we close the history of this period, however, we must observe in general, that tho' *Adadodawla*, *Al Aziz*, and other great princes, were sovereigns of *Syria*, *Arabia*, *Africa*, *Persia*, *Egypt*, and all the delightful countries of the east as far as the *Indus*, yet great part of that sovereignty was nominal. Whole provinces and districts, had their petty tyrants, whom their superiors found it dangerous to punish. The face of those beautiful countries was over-run by gangs of robbers, (each gang having a leader,) who in time of war, served as mercenaries, under some of the great contending princes, and in time of peace, had rocks and fastnesses, and sometimes castles, to repair to, from which, without vast difficulty, they could not be expelled. This generally produced a negotiation between them and their superiors, to whom they paid, or promised to pay, some small acknowledgement in money, or effects, and thus they continued their ravages, and robberies, with impunity.

At the head of those banditti at this time, was one *Omran*; the history of whom, may give the reader some idea of the rest. When very young his villanies were so very enormous, that he was obliged to leave *Jameda*, the place of his nativity, and to take refuge amongst the fens and marshes found upon the banks of the *Tygris*; and which are, in a manner, inaccessible, to any but the most desperate offenders, such as *Omran* was. There he subsisted upon the fishes, and the fowls he caught, in which those places abound, and the iniquities of the times soon drove others to the same uncomfortable, tho' safe, refuge; so that in a short time they formed themselves into a body, of which *Omran*, in right of his prior possession, was the head. They began with short excursions into the adjacent territories, which they plundered,

ed, and being joined by many of the fishermen, they grew to such numbers, that they were enabled to build forts, which, on account of their situation, were so strong as to be able to hold out for some time against a small army. At last, the cries and complaints of the inhabitants of the districts they plundered, reached *Bagdad* itself; and *Moezz-gdawla*, who then acted as *Emir al Omra*, sent several considerable detachments to reduce them: but they still continued to defy his power. He at last resolved to march in person against them with an army, but was prevented by death. The public distractions that soon followed, gave *Omran* an opportunity of extending his command to a very formidable degree; and he became so considerable a tyrant, as to bid defiance, to all the power of the califat. In short, he erected his dominions into a kind of principality, which he called *Al Batiba*, or the district of the marshes. This dominion he kept possession of for near forty years, and left it to his son, whose name was *Al Hasan*, and who was wise enough to enjoy his father's acquisitions in peace, by submitting to own the authority of the califf, and to pay a small consideration annually by way of tribute. But this new principality experienced the fate of greater ones, in that time. It was usurped by *Abul Taraj*, who assassinated his brother *Al Hasan*, and seized upon the government. He, in his turn, was murdered by a conspiracy of the leaders of the court, who raised to the principality the son of *Al Hasan*; but being a minor, they put him under the tuition of *Al Modhaffer*; who had been the first minister of state to *Omran*. This guardian soon seized the government in his own right; and banished his pupil, and his mother, to *Waset*.

His vast
success.

His death
and suc-
cession.

*Samsama-
dawla* is
acknow-
ledged
successor
to *Ada-
dodawla*.

Adadodawla left behind him several sons, and one of them was immediately recognized, by all the great officers both of the state and army, as his successor, and they gave him the appellation of *Samsamadawla*, which signifies, "the *Sabre* of the state." Their election was confirmed by the califf *Al Tay*, who likewise nominated him, to the post of *Emir Al Omra*; and in person invested him with the robe of that high character. It may not be amiss in this place to observe, that, amongst the many other eastern customs adopted by *Europeans*, that investitures, which name still remains, (tho' the ceremony is abolished) seem to have been one. The *Europeans* of those days were considered, what indeed they were, as barbarians; and therefore there can be no room for thinking, that the *Moslems* derived the custom from them; not to mention that the times of this practice of investiture by robes, are to be found in the most antient histories that mention eastern affairs. But the grandeur of the *Buya* family was greatly eclipsed by the death of *Adadodawla*. His second son *Searsodawla*, was at that time in the province of *Karman*, in *Persia*, part of their family dominions; and

and he no sooner heard of his father's death, which was for some days industriously concealed from him, than he attempted to seize upon *Fars*, in his own right, as being the eldest son of the family. But that province had been given to two other of his brothers, *Abul Hosein*, and *Abul Theer*; who had received the formal investiture of it. Notwithstanding this, *Sharfodawla*, pretending to all the honours that his father had died possessed of, made himself master of *Shiraz*, the capital of that province, and being possessed of the cities of *Ispahan*, *Dylam*, and almost all *Persia*, he raised a great army, to recover his rights of seniority. With this view, he summoned his brother *Abul Hosein*, who was in possession of the other cities of *Fars*, to recognize his right; but as he owed his principality to *Samjamadawla*, he opposed *Sharfodawla*, who defeated, and took him prisoner. *Sharfodawla* then made himself master of *Abwas*, *Waset*, and *Basra*; and required *Al Tay* the califf, not only to make him *Emir Al Omra*, but to advance him a sum of money, for the payment of his troops, and to deliver up his brother *Samjamadawla*. *Samjamadawla*, and the noblemen about the califf's person, in vain besought that prince to retire to *Al Mausel*, (which *Samjamadawla* had lately recovered from a free booter, one *Badi*) or to some other city where he could be in safety. But *Sharfodawla* daily advancing nearer to *Bagdad*, at the head of an army of *Dejamiates*, and *Turks*, the califf chose to submit; and complied with all the commands of *Sharfodawla*. The money was paid, and *Samjamadawla* was sent to the same prison where his brother *Abul Hosein* was confined. At first *Sharfodawla* made a moderate use of his success; but he soon pulled off the mask, and behaved to the califf with the same insolence, as his predecessors had done, and even put him into confinement. He appears, however, soon after to have recovered his liberty, and in some measure his authority.

His right
disputed.

He is im-
prisoned,

The reader has already seen, that *Alowayadawla*, had received from the califf the investiture of *Jerjan*, and *Tabarestan*. That prince died in the 373d year of the *Hijra*, and was succeeded in a peaceable manner in all his great possessions by his brother *Fakredawla*, who has been already mentioned. He likewise received the investiture of his principality from *Al Tay*, and lived in a friendly manner with the court of *Bagdad*. *Damascus*, was at that time governed by a tyrant, one *Bocjur*, under *Al Aziz* the Fatemite califf of *Egypt*. The same *Al Aziz* still continued to govern *Africa* by a deputy, who soon erected his government into hereditary right; for we find, that *Al Mansur*, about this time, succeeded his father, as governor of *Africa*, and that, in token of his subjection to *Al Aziz*, he sent him presents to the value of 1,000,000 of dinars. But the continual wars in which *Al Aziz* was engaged rendered his reign very uncomfortable, and forced him upon many unpopular measures.

History of
Jerjan.

Difficul-
ties of *Al*
Aziz.

measures: He particularly imprisoned for their riches, his first minister, and many other of his chief noblemen; and most ingratefully stripped *Jawhar*, who had conquered *Egypt* for him, of all his possessions. Those unpopular steps raised such a commotion in *Meser*, his capital, that he was in danger of being dethroned, till he released the imprisoned noblemen, and made them reparation for all the damages they had sustained. The name of this visir, or minister, was *Calas*, he was originally a Jew, and was the projector of the successful expedition, which *Al Moezz* made into *Egypt*. It is said that he was converted from *Judaism*, to *Mahometanism*, by that califf, who for that reason greatly respected him. It is certain that he was in high esteem under both him and his son, and that the latter, when he died, which he did soon after his being delivered to prison, performed over him, the service of the dead.

The history of the *Karmatians*.

Amongst the other revolutions which, about this time, happened in the califat, *Cufa* changed its master. The *Karmatians*, having new modelled their government, marched against it, and after a vigorous siege, they took and plundered it.

They were marching against *Bagdad* itself, but were opposed and defeated, with so great a slaughter, by the *Emir Al Omra's* troops, that they were afterwards in no condition of alarming the califat. As to the transactions between the *Greeks* and the *Moslems*, they consisted, as usual, of mutual inroads, and plunderings. We are told however, that about this time, the *Greek* emperor *Basilus*, by means of the *Armenians*, made himself master of a very important fortress in *Al Ray*, called *Ibrahim's* Castle; and that he erected it into a kind of place of arms, and a magazine, with a strong garrison, for bridling the neighbouring country. The same emperor had a dispute with *Saddadawla* the son of *Saif-odawla*, whose family was now restored to the government of *Aleppo*, concerning the tribute which, the reader may remember, that prince had promised to pay to the *Greeks*. *Saif-odawla* refusing to continue it, the imperial troops, under *Bardas Phocas*, made an irruption into the *Moslem* territories; where they took the city of *Dara*, and a great number of captives, and laid siege to *Apamea*. Soon after, however, a treaty of peace was concluded between the emperor and *Saddadawla*; by which the latter consented to pay to the former a tribute of about 20000*l.* a year. As to the other revolutions of the califat at this time, they are so confused, and so quick, provinces and cities changing their masters several times in the space of one month, that it is equally uninstruative, and unentertaining to mention them particularly. Add to this, that the incidents we have already recounted, are, thro' the carelessness and confusion of the *Moslem* writers, so blended and ravelled, that the same facts occur in several periods, and sometimes under different names, both of times, and places.

The *Greeks* and other people and generals.

The

The transactions however, of the new erected principality *Mohad-*
of Al Batiha, seem to have met with a fate somewhat better. *awla* is
 The usurper *Modbaffer* was now dead, and was succeeded made so
 by his nephew *Abul Hasun*; whose accession was confirmed vereign
 by a formal instrument and investiture sent from the califf of *Batiha*.
Bagdad. He took the name of *Mohadawla*, and proved a
 prince of great wisdom and temper. The almost inac-
 cessible situation of his dominions gave him vast weight in
 the affairs of the califat. A law-suit being at this time on
 foot, between *Abul Abbas*, the grandson of the califf *Moktader*,
 and his sister, concerning the family estate; the lady im-
 peached her brother of a design to dethrone the califf.
 Whatever truth might be in this accusation, it is certain that
 the califf, about the same time, was in a very declining state of
 health; and had just recovered from a very severe fit of sick-
 ness. The accusation was believed, and a party of the
 califf's guards, was sent to apprehend *Abul Abbas*. But he
 being apprised of his danger, fled to *Mohadawla*, who re- he shelters
 ceived him in a most affectionate, hospitable, manner; and *Abul Ab-*
 placed him in one of his castles, beyond the reach of his *las*.
 enemies; nor did he move from thence till he went to take
 possession of the *Moslem* throne. About this time, the city
 and principality of *Mawfel*, were repossessed, by two princes,
 the descendants of *Naserodawla*. The name of the one was
Thaber and that of the other *Abdallah*; and both of them had History of
 served in the califf's armies with great reputation. But they the de-
 were no sooner settled in their patrimony than they were scendants
 attacked by *Bad*, the tyrant of *Diyar Bekr*. A general action of *Nasero-*
 ensued, in which the two brothers proved successful. *Bad*, *darwia*,
 in attempting to move from one horse to another, an exercise
 in which the *Arabs* are extremely dextrous, fell down, and
 was killed before his attendants could remount him; his
 body being found, it was affixed to a gibbet in *Al Mawfel*.
 This ignominy gave umbrage to the zealous *Moslems*, be-
 cause *Bad* had distinguished himself in the cause of *Ma-*
hometanism, and the brothers therefore gave orders, that it
 should be taken down, and decently interred. *Bad*, who was
 one of the successful robbers of these times, had left his
 wife and family at a castle called *Caisa*. His nephew *Abu*
Ali, escaping from the field of battle, immediately repaired
 to that castle, where he succeeded his uncle, both in his mar-
 riage-bed, and in his dominions. The war was continued
 between him, and the princes of *Mawfel*, over whom he got and of the
 many advantages; and at last he had credit enough to re- princes of
 commend himself to *Al Aziz*, the califf of *Egypt*, who ap- *Mawfel*:
 pointed him to be governor of *Aleppo*; not that it had by this
 time had changed its owner, but *Abu Ali* had a commission
 to conquer *Aleppo* if he could, and then to govern it under
 the califf. It is however certain, that he was a very power-
 ful prince. Amongst the other cities of his dominions, was
Amida, which was making preparations for a revolt, at
 the

the instigation of one *Barri*, a man of great interest in the place. *Abu Ali*, who seems to have been extremely active, strove to prevent this revolt, but he was slain in entering that city.

and of the
sons of
Merwan.

The name of *Abu Ali*'s father was *Merwan*, he was still alive, but very aged and blind, so that his son succeeded to his dominions in right of his mother, who was sister to *Bad*. Two of *Merwan*'s sons were still alive, *Momadaula*, and *Abu Naser*. The former succeeded to his brother, and is reported to have been a prince of lenity and moderation; but he was soon after assassinated by *Sharwah*, one of the officers of his guards, who took possession of all his wealth, and a great part of his dominions. The third son of *Merwan*, *Abu Naser*, was at this time in prison, upon a very singular account. The eastern people, as we have often observed, were infatuated with the belief of judicial astrology, and the fatality of dreams. Every prince amongst them had an astrologer and interpreter of dreams constantly about his person. *Abu Ali* dreamt that he carried the sun in his bosom, and that it was snatched from him by his younger brother. This dream was looked upon to be so portentous, that it cost poor *Abu Naser* his liberty, and *Mosamadaula*, as superstitious as his brother, continued him in confinement during his whole reign. Upon *Mosamadaula*'s death, however, he recovered his liberty, and most of the family possessions; over which he is said to have reigned with great glory and happiness for fifty one years. As to the family of *Naisrodawla*, at *Mausel* they were defeated, and put to death by *Zowad*, the prince of the *Okailite Arabs*, who founded a new dynasty in that province.

their super-
stition.

Death of
*Sharfo-
dawla*.

Sharfodawla, continued, for near three years, to act as *Emir Al Omra*, at *Bagdad*; but being cut off by a dropsy, he was succeeded in that post by *Aahodawla*. *Samsamadaula*, and his two brothers, still continued in prison, in *Persia*, and according to some authors, *Samsamadaula* lost his eyes, by *Sharfodawla*'s orders, but this is not very probable. *Samsamadaula* and his brothers, no sooner had recovered their liberty, than they made the best of their way to *Fars*, where their paternal estate lay; and either by *Bahodawla*'s permission, or by their own intrigues, they got possession of *Schiras*; we shall afterwards have occasion to mention them. But we are now to proceed to the conclusion of this reign:

He is suc-
ceeded by
*Bahodaw-
la*.

Aahodawla, like the *Emirs Al Omras*, his predecessors, was obliged to maintain himself in his power by a standing army of mercenaries, composed of *Turks*, and *Deylamites*. As they were of very different manners, frequent bickerings happened between them, and at last, their differences rose so high, that a great deal of blood was shed on each side; and both parties vowed revenge. *Aahodawla* had, by this time, most inhumanly put to death his brother *Sharfodawla*'s son,

and

and perceiving he was unable to accomodate matters, between the soldiers of the two nations, he shut himself up without taking either part for twelve days; during which time, great disorders and blood-shed happened, but the *Turks*, tho' few in number, were better troops, and generally had the advantage. *Bahodawla*, finding he could remain no longer neuter, meanly declared himself in favour of the *Turks*, against the *Deylamites*, his own subjects, and countrymen; and the *Turks* obtained thereby a great superiority in *Bagdad*.

The *Emir Al Omra*, as well as the califf, was now a Infolence cypher in the government. Every thing was directed by of the the imperious soldiery, and *Bahodawla* at last found him- army, self under a kind of necessity to depose the califf, was it for no other reason, than to get possession of his wealth and effects, for the payment of his troops. *Abul Abbas* still remained under the protection of *Mahadawla*, the prince of *Batika*, who proved his generous protector, and no doubt *Bahodawla* had a correspondence with him, for we find that he married that *Emir's* daughter. *Bahodawla*, to make sure of his blow, demanded a formal audience of the califf, that he might, with the less suspicion, introduce his guards into the imperial palace. The califf readily complied with this request, but soon found himself surrounded by traitors, who dragged him from his seat, and wrapping him up in the Deposition and character tapresty that adorned the audience room, ordered him to *Bahodawla's* palace; without any one having the least regard, to his loud exclamations for God to punish the authors of such treason and barbarity. When conveyed to *Bahodawla's* palace, an instrument was tendered to him, for renouncing the califat; which he was obliged to comply with before the *Cadi of Bagdad*; who it seems was the usual witness upon such occasions.

Al Tay sat upon the *Moslem* throne almost eighteen years, of the califf, and was about seventy six years of age at the time of his death, which happened about twelve years after his abdication. Very little can be said as to his character, because he had no will of his own; being, during the greatest part of his reign, under the tutelage of his *Emirs Al Omra*. With regard to his person, we are told that his complexion was fair, and his face red. Upon his deposition all his riches and effects fell into the hands of *Bahodawla*.

Al Kader, the twenty-fifth califf of the house of Al Abbas.

IF we are to believe the *Moslem* historians, *Al Kader*, when He is succeeded by the messenger brought him the news of his elevation to the *Moslem* throne, was telling a dream to those about him *Al Kader* predictive

predictive of his future dignity. The dream, being thus favourably interpreted, he immediately set out for *Bagdad*, where he was duly recognized as califf, and married *Bahod-awla's* daughter.

History of
Aleppo.

Notwithstanding the commission granted by the califf of *Egypt*, for the reduction of *Aleppo*, by *Abu Ali*, yet it appears that *Saddadawla*, the son of *Saifodawla*, was still in possession of that principality; and about this time, had put the rebel *Bacjur*, whom he vanquished, to death. After that, *Saddadawla* marched to *Al Ramla*, where *Bacjur's* family resided and his wealth lay, and was preparing to besiege it, when they offered to surrender it, upon condition, of their being permitted to retire, with all their money and effects, to some other place. *Saddadawla* agreed to this proposal, but the treaty was no sooner signed, than it was shamefully broken, and *Bacjur's* children were plundered of their all. Upon *Saddadawla's* return to *Aleppo*, he was struck with a palsy which took from him the use of his right hand. His physician being instantly sent for, the patient could only stretch forth to him his left hand, telling him, in the emphatical Arab style, that his right hand had not left him the use of his right hand; meaning, that the violation of the treaty he had signed with his right hand, had deprived him of its service. He survived this disaster but three days, and, before his death, he bequeathed the care of his infant son *Fadayel*, to *Lulu*, a manumitted slave; but a person of the most invincible integrity and honour.

Death of
Saddad-awla.

The
Greeks ar-
rive at
Aleppo,

The death of *Saddadawla*, encouraged *Al Aziz* the *Egyptian* califf to renew his pretensions to the principality of *Aleppo*, and accordingly he sent a great army to make them good, under the conduct of *Manjubekin*, who soon formed the siege of *Aleppo*. *Lulu* finding himself distressed, and his pupil in danger of being ruined, applied for assistance to the *Greek* emperor; who sent him an army for his relief; but it was defeated by *Manjubekin*, and the siege was renewed with vigour. The approach of the *Greeks* however, seems to have given *Lulu* an opportunity of reinforcing the city, both with troops and provisions; for the *Egyptian*, upon his return to the siege, met with so vigorous a resistance, that he dispatched a courier to his master, requesting leave to give it up. *Al Aziz*, who had set his heart upon this conquest, receiving the letter, fell into a violent passion, and dispatched a courier to *Manjubekin*, with positive orders to continue it at all hazards. Before this courier could arrive, *Manjubekin* had found himself obliged to raise the siege, but perceiving that his master's orders were peremptory, he resumed it, and continued it obstinately for thirteen months. *Lulu* defended the place with equal courage, and during that time, he found means to renew his solicitations at the court of *Constantinople*, who sent a great army to his relief. This obliged *Manjubekin*, who had lost one half of his army be-
fore

and deli-
ver its
prince.

fore the city, once more to raise the siege; and to retire in great confusion. Their retreat left the *Greeks* no enemies, between them and *Aleppo*, and they were received by *Lulu*, and his pupil, with the utmost demonstrations of affection and gratitude. But tho' the *Greeks* were thus the deliverers of *Aleppo*, we are informed that they took and plundered *Hems*, and a great many places in the neighbourhood; and then returned towards *Constantinople*. The repulse which *Manjubekin* received before *Aleppo*, so greatly exasperated the *Egyptian* califf, that he marched in person to reduce that city, but he was prevented from advancing by a severe fit of sickness.

The beginning of this califf's reign was, as usual, disturbed Hej. 382. by the inroads of the *Greeks*, and by domestic seditions. He A. D. 992 was no other than a dependant upon *Bahodawla*, his father in law, the *Emir Al Omra*; yet the people could easily put up with that circumstance, because it had been long familiar to them. But they could not bear with the thoughts that *Bahodawla* himself was no other than the pupil of a worthless favourite he had, one *Moallam*. This raised an insurrection in *Bagdad*, which was carried on both by the citizens and soldiers. But *Bahodawla*, very wisely provided in time for his own safety, by giving his favourite up into the hands of the soldiers, who immediately put him to death. Inroads of the *Greeks*

Next year, a war broke out in the outmost confines of the antient califat, where *Nuh*, of the great family of *Sammaoni* was sovereign of *Korasan* and *Mawaralnar*. He was invaded by one *Bagra*, who possessed a vast tract of land, extending even to *China*. *Nuh's* forces were defeated, he lost *Samar-kand*, and *Bokhara*, the metropolis of *Mawaralnar*, and *Nuh* was obliged to retire over the *Oxus*. Here he endeavoured to assemble an army out of *Korasan*, but his governor of that province refused to obey his orders, and joined with *Bagra*; to whom historians give a great character, for virtue and piety. *Bagra* however, during his expedition, fell sick and died; and *Nuh* repossessed himself of the cities he had lost. But *Simjur*, his governor of *Korasan*, still held out against him. He was joined by his brother *Faik*, and they were at the head of a great army. The reader is to observe that the chief seats of this war, were in those countries, where the *Turks* had their original; and *Bagra* was in possession of *Turkistan* at the time of his death; and therefore is by some historians called the king of the *Turks*. After various revolutions of war, *Nuh* was obliged to make *Sabaktekin*, a famous *Turkish* commander, his governor of *Korasan*; and *Sabaktekin*, with his son *Mamond*, gave *Simjur*, and his brother, several defeats. A compromise, however, was made by *Simjur* and *Nuh*, but violated by the latter, who is said to have broken the articles of the treaty, and to have thrown *Simjur*, with his adherents into prison; where he finished his days. His brother *Faik*, however

History of
the *Sammaoni*
family in
Korasan.

ever, still kept the field, and at last forced *Nub* to make him governor of *Samarkand*, and all its district. We have mentioned those particulars here, because, even in those remote parts, the supremacy of the califf of *Bagdad* was still acknowledged, and held in veneration.

and of
Fakro-
dawla in
Forjan.

Fakrodawla still continued to govern, in peace and glory, the vast dominions he had succeeded to; but it is admitted by all historians, that he had the happiness of being served by the wisest, and the best minister, that ever appeared in the east. His name was *Abul Kasem*. He was of an illustrious family; and as much beloved for the sweetness of his disposition, and the virtue of his manners, as he was revered for his strength of abilities, and his knowledge of government. There are perhaps few ministers in history in whose praises all authors are so unanimous; and amongst the other circumstances that formed his high character, he was himself a man of learning, and a patron of the same: and is said to have possessed a greater library, than any *Moslem* subject ever had. But his value was not fully known till his death. For *Fakrodawla* having committed to him the entire management of his government, he introduced so excellent an œconomy into the same, that he was the most splendid, and happy prince of all the east. While *Abul Kasem* was on his death bed, his master visited him, and begged he would leave him some instructions for his future conduct.

Abul Kasem recommended to him, that he would pursue the maxims and methods he had laid down, and to observe them so strictly, as that, it might not be said, that his prosperity was owing only to his departed vizir. But notwithstanding this excellent advice, we are told that, after *Abul Kasem's* death, his affairs went to confusion; he became oppressive to his subjects, and they uneasy to him.

Hej. 386.
A. D. 996
Death and
character
of *Al Aziz*.

In the 386th year of the *Hejra* died, after a turbulent reign, in the 42d year of his age, of a complication of distempers *Al Aziz*, the califf of *Egypt*. He was a prince of great virtues, but was reduced often to very severe, and unjustifiable measures, thro' the necessities of his government. He had two chief ministers of state, one of them, *Isa*, who was his secretary, was a Christian, the other *Minassab*, was a Jew; and his favourite wife was a Christian likewise. The subjects of *Al Aziz*, both in *Egypt* and *Syria*, were the most worthless, inconstant, turbulent people on the face of the earth: and the effects of this character, were greatly heightened, by the credit in which they saw the Christians, at the Fatemite califf's court. His wife had two brothers, *Jeremiah*, and *Arsemus*, of whom the former was made patriarch of *Jerusalem*, and other of the *Melchites*, at the new founded city of *Cairo*; and the Christians, in general, lived under *Al Aziz*, not only in a peaceable but a flourishing condition; nor had the *Jews* any cause of complaint. Perhaps both those people were a little insolent upon the favour they

The califf
of *Persia*,

met

met with at court. It is certain, that the people at *Mefer*, and they, were continually quarrelling; and it required all the uncommon prudence, and moderation, that *Al Aziz* was possessed of, to keep himself upon the throne. He found himself however, obliged to part with his Christian minister *Isa*, and to strip him of all his riches upon the following occasion. The discontents of the people of *Mefer* arose to such a height, that they contrived to place a pasteboard figure of a woman, upon a road by which *Al Aziz* was to pass, with a scrawl in her hand, containing the following inscription. "By the being who has enabled *Isa* to make the Christians powerful, and insolent, and *Minassab* the Jews, and who has rendered thee the scourge of the *Moslems*, we conjure thee to tell us, when our miseries shall have an end". *Al Aziz* did not think of trifling with such a spirit as this; and instantly gave up *Isa*, as we have mentioned. Tho' he was often pestered with such libels, yet he overlooked and pardoned them, with vast magnanimity, and his answer to one of his visirs, upon this subject, is worthy to be reported. The visir having been lashed in a lampoon, which did not spare the califf himself, and having discovered the author, he laid the matter before the califf, in hopes of having the author punished severely. But the califf's answer was, "You see sir I have borne part of the abuse aimed at you, now you shall be a part with me, in the glory of forgiving the author." *Al Aziz* died in the 22 d year of his reign, leaving behind him his son *Al Mansur*, who was but eleven years of age, and committing him to the care of *Arjuun*, a white eunuch, upon whose wisdom and fidelity he absolutely depended. This *Al Mansur*, afterwards took the title of *Al Hakem*. Tho' he still kept up his pretensions to a supremacy over the califat of *Kairwan*, yet he had the mortification during his reign to seeth *Hamedite* dynasty, founded in *Africa*.

his virtues
and mo-
deration,

Succeeded
by *Al Ha-
kem*.

Wasmakin, whose original territories, *Fakrowdawla* was in possession of, was still alive. The reader may remember, that he lost them for his attachment to *Thakrodawla*. It is therefore reasonable to suppose, that as *Fakrodawla* possessed *Jorjan*, and *Tabrestan*, only in right of his investiture from the califf of *Bagdad*, that he was not at liberty, during his own life time, to restore them to his benefactor. This may account for the silence of historians, as to the means, by which *Wasmakin* recovered possession of his dominions, as he did upon the death of *Fakrodawla*; which happened about this time. But his son *Rostan*, who was very young, succeeded to the great principality of *Al Ray*, which his mother *Seyda* governed for him, with the approbation of the nobility of the country, and of the court of *Bagdad*, which sent him the proper robes of investiture, for the same.

See page

History of
Wasmakin
of *Jorjan*.

!

A war

History
and rise of
the fa-
mous Sul-
tan Mah-
mud.

A war now broke out, between *Mahmud*, and *Ishmael*, the two sons of *Sabektekin*, who had died some time before. *Ishmael* the younger, having been nominated by the father to the succession while *Mahmud* was at *Naisabur*, the latter demanded to be put in possession of his right, as eldest. But meeting with no answer to this demand, he raised an army with which he made his claim good. He defeated his brother in a pitched battle, forced him to take refuge in the castle of *Gazna*, and at last to submit to his terms. We are told however, that he made no ungenerous use of his superiority, and treated his brother with affection. This revolution was followed by the death of *Nuh*, the prince of *Korasan*, and the seventh of the *Sammanian* dynasty, who reigned over that country. He was succeeded by his son *Abul Hareth*. This year likewise was fatal to *Mamun* the king of *Kowarazm*, who would admit of no kind of dependance upon the califf; and he was succeeded by his son, by hereditary right.

When *Azzodawla*, was put to death by *Adadodawla*, he left behind him a son, *Abul Kasem*. This *Abul Kasem*, had been imprisoned along with *Samsamadaula*, and both of them recovered their liberty at the same time. The first use which *Abul Kasem* made of his liberty, was to invade *Arjon*, a city, that lay in *Samsamadaula's* paternal territories, and this brought on a war between him and *Samsamadaula*, which ended in the defeat and death of the latter; when his head was carried to *Abul Kasem*, "This, said that prince, is a lesson I was taught by your father," alluding to *Addadawla*, *Samsamadaula's* father, having cut off the head of *Abul Kasem's* father.

Revolution in
Korasan.

The transactions that fell out about this time in *Korasan* and *Mawaralnar* were very important and interesting; and ended in the extinction of the *Sammanian* dynasty in those countries. *Bekturun*, and *Fayek*, two ingrateful rebels, deposed and put out the eyes of *Abul Hareth*, the son of *Nuh*, and raised his brother *Abdolmalec* to the throne. Upon this *Mahmud*, the son of *Sabektekin* the Turk, and surnamed *Gazin*, interposed in favour of the dethroned prince. But finding his good offices were in vain, he raised an army, and after defeating them with great slaughter, he drove them out of *Korasan* into *Bokhara*; where *Fayek* died. As the rebels had carried along with them, *Abdolmalec*, whose name was useful for their designs, another Turkish prince, named *Ilek Kan*, drawing together a body of troops, declared himself for *Abdolmalec*; who, together with *Bakturun* and his other generals, left *Bokhara*, to join *Ilek*. But that *Kan* perfidiously ordered them all to be made prisoners; and not only *Abdolmalec*, but his brother the deposed prince, and most of their generals died under their confinement. In the mean time *Mahmud Gasni*, being in possession of *Korasan*, *Ilek* contented himself with making himself master of *Bokhara*.

bara. *Ilek's* design was to have put an end at once to the *Samanian* dynasty; but *Monteser*, one of the sons of *Nuh*, Adventure of by the help of a female slave, escaped to *Kowarazin*; where he raised an army, which twice defeated that of *Ilek*, and *Monteser*. put him in possession of *Bokhara*. But *Ilek* soon after, recruiting his forces, obliged *Monteser*, with his general *Aslan*, to fly to *Nisabur*. There they continued for some time, and the troops they had with them were at last joined by a body of *Turks*, or *Turkamans*, who lived without order, laws, religion or any settled place of abode, but were active, brave and war-like. By their means *Montaser* made a powerful irruption into *Marawalnar*, but he was soon met with by *Ilek*, at the head of an army, advantageously encamped. This was no bar to the rapacious *Turkmans*. Understanding that *Ilek's* camp was rich, they broke into it in the night time with irresistible fury; and putting all they met with to the sword, they carried off a great deal of plunder, the only object of their service, for they immediately abandoned *Montaser*, and returned to their hords. It happened fortunately for *Montaser*, that the river *Jibu*, was then passible over the ice, by which, after this desertion of his auxiliaries, he escaped. For no sooner did the barbarians reflect, that great part of the plunder had fallen to the share of his troops, than they set out in great bodies to attack him, and carry it off. But a thaw happening in the intermediate time, they could not follow *Montaser* over the *Oxus*.

By this time *Mahmud Gazni*, who was a prince of prodigious projects, and ambition, had formed a project of penetrating into the richest part of the Indies. He could not execute this, without leaving every thing behind him secure. He was now in possession of all the territories belonging to the family of *Nuh*; which seems to have been his great aim in declaring for the princes of that house. But finding that *Montaser*, had been abandoned by the *Turks*, and that *Ilek* was likely to become a powerful competitor for *Korasan*, he gave up all the interests of the *Nuh* family, concluded a treaty with *Ilek*, and took his daughter in marriage. This left *Mahmud*, who was a strong *Mahometan*, at liberty to follow his favourite scheme, and to penetrate into the heart of *India* itself; into countries, immensely rich, and but little known, even to the *Moslems*. This attempt was attended with success, and the riches he acquired by it were incredible; but, at the same time, like a true politician, he carried not only his own cause, but that of *Mahmud*, upon the point of his lance; for we are told, that he propagated *Islamism*, even in the heart of *India*; and nothing can be a greater proof of the extent of the *Moslem* arms, than that the bulk of the inhabitants of that country, are to this day *Mahometans*. *Gabel*, the most powerful king of those immense, but rich tracts, was by him twice taken prisoner, and twice set at liberty; upon a surrender, as we

Rise of the
power of
the Sultan
Mahmud.

His adven-
tures in
may *India*.

may easily suppose, of his most valuable treasures, and effects, into the hands of the conqueror. We are told likewise a circumstance which agrees well with the more modern instances of barbarity in that country, that being disqualified from reigning, by being twice vanquished, and a captive; he was obliged to resign his crown to his son, and to sacrifice himself to the flames.

His vast
successes.

Bokhara
taken.

Montaser
ruined,

and killed

During *Mahmud's* absence, upon this uncertain expedition, his new ally *Ilek*, who is said to have been kind to all the oriental *Turks*, laid a scheme of improving it to his own advantage; as did *Montaser*, who was equally the enemy of both. But all their projects seem to have been dashed in pieces, by the return of *Mahmud* to *Gazna*, with the immense riches he had acquired in his expedition. He found his government in great disorder. *Montaser* had gained great advantages over *Ilek*, as *Ilek* had over *Mahmud*, during his absence, while numberless parties of handitti, wild *Turks*, and other nations, were the declared enemies of all the three princes, and seized in their dominions, all that they could make themselves masters of. It was the good fortune of *Montaser* to defeat one *Jasfar*, a ringleader of those robbing tribes, but he was in his turn checked by *Mahmud's* governor of *Koralan*, and was obliged to repass the *Jabun*. He had however, the good fortune, afterwards, to possess the city of *Bokhara*. We find that this city was in his hands in the 394th year of the *Hejra*, and that *Ilek* had marched with an army to dispossess him of it. But *Montaser*, animated with success, met and defeated him. There was however, no certainty in those successes. The soldiers, who served under all parties, were rapacious, irregular, and must be bribed to their duty; so that whoever had the greatest riches succeeded the best. *Ilek* bribed one of *Montaser's* officer's, who deserted him with four thousand of his best troops; which obliged *Montaser* to make a precipitate retreat over the *Oxus* towards *Bokhara*, which was still in his possession. Being closely pursued by *Ilek's* generals, he found himself unable to stand his ground there, and he was obliged to fly to *Korasan*, in a very mean condition. Tho' *Mahmud Gazni*, and *Ilek*, had great subjects of quarrel with each other, yet both of them united in the destruction of *Montaser*, who was the lawful heir to the most valuable part of the territories of both. *Montaser* therefore, finding himself on all hands betrayed and oppressed, sought to repass the *Oxus*; but that being impracticable, he dismissed all his attendants, and disguising his name, and quality, he took refuge in a cottage in *Korasan*. But being now helpless, forlorn, and poor, he was so closely observed by *Bed*, one of *Mahmud's* generals, that he was surprized during the night in the hovel, by an officer called *Maruyah*; who put him to death. Tho' it cannot be supposed, that this execution was disagreeable to *Mahmud*, yet he ordered the officer,

officer, because he received no particular orders from himself, to be put to death, under most exquisite torments, which was done. Thus ended the *Sammanian* dynasty in *Korasan*, and that sovereignty descended to the *Gazni* family, for so the house of *Nuh* is termed. As we may not perhaps have an opportunity hereafter in any place of this history to introduce the subsequent part of *Mahmud Gazni's* life, we shall beg leave to pursue it here, and the rather, because this part of the antient califat still owned the supremacy of the *Al Abbas* family, and because *Mahmud's* adventures are but little known to *Europeans*, tho' he was one of the most successful commanders that had lived to that time.

Having long served under his father *Sa'ektekin* in *India*, he was no stranger to the riches of that country, and to the effeminacy of its inhabitants; and he seems very early to have formed the plan of conquering, or rather, of plundering it. His father was of a nation, and he himself commanded armies the most proper of any in the world for executing such a plan; and by the extinction of the *Sammanian* race, and his peace with *Ilek*, he found himself the undisputed sovereign of a vast and a populous country. His first care, as has been already observed, was to procure the tranquility, as far as he could, of his dominions in his absence, being well acquainted not only with the riches, but the situation, the strength, and all other particulars of the countries he designed to attack; and this year, he besieged the city of *Bahadiyah*, lying near the kingdom of *Moltan*, a part of *India*. He took this city, notwithstanding the strength of its fortifications, and height of its walls; and it answered his end, of securing to him an easy entrance into, and retreat from, *India*. For, next year, he over-ran all the kingdoms of *Moltan*, and *Hobath*, and penetrating further into *India*, he laid siege to *Cabjur*, a strong city, where *Bida*, the king of the country, had shut himself up. The undisciplined, effeminate *Indians*, whose manners were then the same, as they were in the times of *Alexander the Great*, could not make head against *Mahmud*, and he obliged *Bida* to surrender to him, and become his tributary; nor must it be forgot, that the receiving *Islamism*, was always an indispensable obligation imposed by *Mahmud* upon his conquests.

Progress
of *Mah-*
mud in
India.

Mahmud was now dignified, with the title of *Sultan*. But while he was in this career of success in *India*, his general *Arflan*, whom he had left to command for him in *Iberat*, sent him notice, that *Ilek*, taking advantage of his absence, and of the infidelity of his governor of *Sejistan*, had raised a great army, and was preparing to invade *Korasan* in two quarters. He returns *Mahmud* having secured his new conquests in the best manner he could, immediately marched back, with such quickness, towards *Korasan*, that he surprized *Ilek's* generals, who durst not stand before him. Their soldiers were daunted at the name of this mighty conqueror; and *Ilek* himself, was

from
thence.

He con-
quers *Ihek*

was driven back to his own dominions, beyond the *Ibu*. In this distress, *Ilek* applied to *Kader Kan*, a powerful prince, who governed the kingdom of *Ketan*, thought to be the modern *Katay*, who furnished him with an army of fifty thousand men, most of them horse. These being joined by *Ilek's* troops, who were *Turks*, composed a body far more formidable than any that *Mahmud* could then bring against them; and they marched to besiege *Balk*, or *Balki*, one of his most important cities. The *Sultan*, who like many other great warriors, was a thorough enthusiast, in this time of danger, had recourse to prayer, and receiving from thence great spirits, he ordered his troops to be drawn out in order of battle, and mounting his white elephant, a noble animal, whom he greatly trusted to, he gave a signal for attacking the enemy, who were drawn up against them. But their numbers being unequal, *Mahmud's* troops were upon the point of giving way; when he formed a desperate and great, but in the condition he then was, a wise resolution. He rode his elephant into the very thickest of the *Turkish* troops, and the noble creature, tearing up, or trampling down, the enemy, *Mahmud* cut his way to the very person of *Ilek*; whom the elephant unhorsed with his trunk, and tossed up in the air; and at the same time, cleared the ground of all the *Turks* about him.

He again
marches
into *India*.

This brave action, so conspicuous to both armies, turned the fortune of the day; for the *Sultan's* troops, taking new spirits, rallied, and renewing the charge, defeated the *Turks* with such slaughter, that the battle was looked upon as the bloodiest that had been fought in that age, only a few of the *Turks* escaping, by swimming over the river *Ibu*. The *Sultan Mahmud* had leisure, by this great victory, to resume his expeditions into *India*, and returning thither, he defeated *Bal*, one of the most powerful kings of all *Indoستان*; and took the fortress of *Behesim*, the great repository of his riches. Before we proceed further in this narrative, it may be proper to premonish the reader, by informing him, that the country of *Indoستان* was incomparably, in gold and precious stones, the richest of any in the world; and was in a great measure, the source of all the splendor of the East. Their kings, however, seem at all times to have been fond of amassing prodigious magazines of money, and jewels; nor can the relation of the vast booty which the *Sultan* made here, be credible to any one, who does not reflect upon the riches, which *Kuli Khan*, even in our own times, found in and carried out of the same country. It may likewise be necessary, the better to establish the credibility of *Mahmud's* exploits, to acquaint our readers, that of old in the eastern countries, and indeed, all over *Asia*, *Africa*, and even in some parts of *Europe*, the elephant was held to be a very useful and formidable animal in war. But, like horses, they differ greatly in their breed, and the white species,

species, is, to this day, esteemed so precious, that a king who possesses one of them, amongst his other superb titles, Excell-
calls himself king of the White Elephant. As they gene-
rally fought in harness, and were well managed, it is not the ele-
therefore at all incredible, that *Mahmud* should gain the phant.
battle of *Balk*, in the manner we have described, especially
as we do not perceive from history, that the elephants were
used in battle at this time, any where but in *India*.

The emperor, and the other potentates of *Indostan*, find-
ing themselves unable to oppose the progress of *Mahmud*,
who, by the conquest of *Behesim*, had made himself master *Mahmud*
of an immense booty, proposed to him terms of accommo- conquers
dation; which he readily accepted of, as he was so far *Indostan*.
from his own dominions, and in no condition to keep pos-
session of his new conquests. It was therefore agreed, that
they should pay him annually, a vast tribute, that a com-
merce and intercourse, between their dominions, should be
opened, by means of caravans, and that the princes of *In-
dostan* should furnish *Mahmud* with fifty of their best ele-
phants, and a sufficient number of persons, skilled in ma-
naging and training them. This peace being established,
Mahmud returned to his dominions.

Ilek, after his defeat, near *Balk*, retired to *Marawalnar*,
where he assembled an army, upon his being informed that
his brother *Dogan*, who had fought with him at the battle History of
of *Balk*, had secretly made his submission to *Sultan Mah- Ilel.*
mud. But before he could chastise *Dogan* for this, *Mahmud*
returned to *Korasan*, and either the fear of him, or, as was
said, his interposition, effected a reconciliation between the
two brothers. But this accomodation lasted no longer, than
the *Sultan's* abode in that country, for upon his return into
India, *Ilek* marched from *Samarkan* to besiege his brother in
Urkand, a city of *Marawalner*. A deep snow falling, he
was obliged to desist from his undertaking, and returning
to *Turkistan*, he there died, and was succeeded by his
brother *Dogan*, notwithstanding all the enmity he bore
him.

In the mean while, *Sultan Mahmud* had penetrated into
the province of *Guzarate*, one of the richest in all *India*,
where he made its king, whose name was *Suri*, his prisoner.
But this prince soon put an end to his own life, by taking
some poison which he kept concealed in a ring or bracelet.
About the same time, *Altun Tash*, an officer under the
Sultan, invaded *Gurjestan*, or *Georgia*, where a prince Great con-
reigned, under the denomination of *Shar* which seems to be quests of
the same with *Czar*, or *Cæsar*. This prince was defeated *Mahmud*
and taken prisoner, by *Altun Tash*, and sent to the *Sultan*, in *India*.
who restored him to his liberty and his dominions, upon the
Shar's promising to be subject to him, and to pay him an
annual tribute. But the *Shar*, soon after broke his pro-
mise, and taking up arms again, was again defeated, taken
prisoner,

prisoner, and sent to *Mahmud*; who ordered him to be whipt in public by the common executioner, as a run-away slave, and confined him all the remaining part of his life in a prison. In him ended the race of the *Sbar's* king of *Gurjestan*. But the whole of this transaction is told by other authors in a different manner. They say that the *Sbar* of *Gurjestan*, had been placed upon that throne by *Sabektekin*; or his son *Mahmud*, in consideration of his faithful services. That having associated his son *Abu Naser* with him in the government, they refused, under frivolous pretexts, to march under the *Sultan* into *India*. Upon this, which *Mahmud* looked upon as an act of rebellion or mutiny, he sent *Altun Tash* and *Aflan*, and other generals, to chastise them. That the father, whose name was *Mahomet*, submitted, but the son defended one of his fortresses for some time, against the *Sultan's* troops, and being forced to surrender it, with his own person, he was put to the rack, publicly whipt, and forced to discover the vast treasures he had amassed; and afterwards ended his days in prison. But his father *Mahomet* had an estate assigned to him, near *Gazni*, to compensate for the throne he had lost.

His investiture by the califf.

It may be here necessary to put the reader in mind, the propagation of *Islamism*, was a fundamental principle in the constitution of the califat, and that *Mahmud*, who was a most pious *Moslem*, had taken care to receive from the califf of *Bagdad*, robes of investiture for all his dominions, by which he acquired a power of acting as in the place of the califf himself, and by his authority. We observe this by way of apology for the *Sultan's* treatment of the *Sbar* of *Gurjestan*, and for the conscience of the *Sultan*, in pushing his conquests in *India*, against princes, and people, who never had offended him, with such insatiable avarice, and ambition. From the same principle it was, that he reduced the kingdom of *Kowarazin*, back to its dependance upon the califat, that is upon himself. For tho' *Mahmud* had succeeded his father, who bore the same name in that kingdom; and had married the *Sultan Mahmud's* sister, or, according to others, his daughter, he was compelled to acknowledge the supremacy of *Mahmud*, as acting under the califf's authority, and we are told that he was not only defeated, but dethroned by *Mahmud*; who gave his kingdom to his general *Altun Tash*. He met however with some difficulty from *Takin*, a nobleman of that country, who pretended to the sovereignty of it, and who was accused of having poisoned *Mahmud*, who happened to die about that time. The *Sultan* marched against *Takin*, at the head of an army, but being vigorously surprized in his camp, it was with great difficulty, that he escaped a total defeat. *Takin*, however, was routed and put to flight; being seized by a boat-man, to death. whom he applied for his passage over a river; he was sent prisoner

prisoner to *Mahmud*, by whom he was put to death, for his insolent, perhaps magnanimous, behaviour before him.

Such are the facts, we have been able to collect of this mighty conqueror; the first, by all accounts, who since the days of *Alexander the Great*, had penetrated into the heart of *India*. But we have been obliged to piece them together, being destitute of any regular detail, as to time, persons, or places. The facts however of themselves, are in the main strongly established; and we have arranged them in the most probable manner. For he no sooner had finished his affairs, in those which he looked upon as his hereditary dominions, than he returned to his favourite expedition into the *Indies*; and propagated Islamism, wherever he conquered. We cannot however help observing upon this occasion, that *Mahmud's* piety was, perhaps greatly whetted, by the vast number of gold, and silver idols, and vessels, many of them adorned with the most precious jewels, which he found in the idolatrous temples, all which his religion obliged him to break in pieces, and to carry along with him, so that he might not leave amongst the inhabitants, the smallest fragment of idolatry. In the expedition he undertook, immediately after settling the affair of *Kowarazin*, we are told he penetrated to *Kisraje*, which lies, a three month's journey, from his own capital of *Gazni*. In his march, he was opposed by *Gulkand*, one of the pagan *Rajah's*, or as they are now called *Nabobs*, whom he defeated, and put fifty thousand of his men to the sword. This *Rajah* it seems had a beautiful wife, whom he put to death, as he did himself immediately after, to prevent her falling into the power of the conqueror. *Mahmud* however, never durst venture to be long absent from his own dominions, where he knew the source of all his power lay. It is almost needless to tell the reader, that he returned to *Gazni* with an immense booty, and with such a number of slaves, that tho' he ordered them to be sold for about 6s. sterling a piece, it was with difficulty he could dispose of them. Whether the *Sultan Mahmud*, made another expedition into *India* after this, is not quite clear, tho' it is probable he did; and the same is affirmed by the *Persian* authors. Be that as it will, it is certain that before his death, he marched into *Sumenat*, which lay in the southern parts of *India*, and is said to have taken its name from an idol which was worshipped by the inhabitants of the country; tho' some say with greater probability, that the name of that idol was *Lat*, or *Al Lat*. *Mirkhend* the *Persian* historian, on whom we are obliged to depend for the accounts we have of this *Sultan*, says, that the temple of this idol, was supported by fifty six pillars of massy gold, adorned with jewels. But notwithstanding the credit we are willing to allow to that historian, and the immense riches, which we admit to have been in those countries, we must think this relation exaggerated, and the rather that we

Darkness
of *Mah-*
mud's his-
tory.

His im-
mense
riches.

estimate
of them.

know from modern experience, and demonstration, that the massy pillars of gold, with which the eastern writers, have adorned their temples, and palaces; have been found to be no other then pillars of wood, or certain compositions; gilded or laquered, or at best plated over, with very thin gold. The statute of this idol, we are told was fifty cubits in length, but that forty seven of the cubits were buried in the ground; probably to accommodate it the better to the loftiness of the temple, of which, therefore, we can conceive no great idea. *Mahmud*, is said to have broken this idol in pieces, with his own hands, to have killed fifty thousand of its votaries, and to have taken as much money out of the king of that country's treasury, as amounted to 5,000,000 l. sterling, a circumstance, which is by no means improbable.

His vir-
tues.

But while we are thus dwelling upon the successes of this great prince in gratifying his ambition and avarice, we are not to forget those virtues which are unanimously allowed to him, by all historians. It is needless to observe, he was brave in the highest degree. Though of *Turkish* extraction, he was, like his cotemporary princes of the East, an encourager of men of genius, and of learning, and we are told, that his minister, *Al Meimendi*, was the patron of the celebrated *Persian* poet *Ferdusi*, nay, that *Mahmud* himself used to compose moral verses, particularly, upon his own face, which was remarkably ugly; and was therefore a great mortification to him. It is likewise allowed, that he was mild, affable, and temperate, and we have in the following story, a proof of his justice, of perhaps, as extraordinary a turn as any we meet with in history.

Remark-
able story
of him.

A poor man at *Gazni*, had a handsome wife, whom an insolent *Turkish* soldier in the *Sultan's* service, took a fancy to; and the *Turk* breaking in in the night, drove him from thence with the most injurious treatment. The husband, however, finding himself attacked in so tender a part, ran to the palace, threw himself at the feet of the *Sultan*, recounted his story, and in the most moving manner, implored his protection. *Mahmud* heard him favourably, and desired the suppliant, if ever the *Turk* should come to his house again, to apply directly to him. About three days after, the *Turk*, renewed his injurious visit, and the man, immediately ran to the califf, and acquainted him with the matter, as he had ordered. The califf, without hesitating a moment, ordered a few attendants to follow him, and was conducted by the husband, to his house. Being arrived at the door, he ordered the light to be put out, and the husband introduced him to the room where the *Turk* was, whom the *Sultan* immediately laid dead at his feet. He then ordered lights to be brought up, and after attentively viewing the face of the deceased, he prostrated himself in thanksgiving to heaven. This act of devotion being finished, the *Sultan* ordered

ordered the poor man to set before him, what victuals he had in the house, and he made a hearty repast of some barely bread and sour wine; which was all the cheer that could be procured. His behaviour in the mean while, was so affable, that his landlord was encouraged to enter into conversation with him, and even to ask him the meaning of his having put out the light, his viewing the criminal stedfastly, and of his feeding so heartily on such homely fare. "Friend," replied the *Sultan*, "when I heard thy story I was alarmed, and thought, that none but my own sons, durst venture to commit such insolence, which I resolved most severely to punish. I ordered the light to be put out, that I might not see the criminal, lest the pleadings of nature should disarm my justice. Upon inspection, I found the criminal was not my son, for which I gave thanks to heaven, and thy story having made such an impression upon me, that I have not been able to eat or drink these three days, is the reason of my feeding so heartily upon this fare."

Such were the sentiments of piety and justice in a prince, who was desolating half the world, by avarice, ambition, and cruelty, as if the greatness and success of an offender, diminished the offence. We shall conclude the amazing, but confused, account of his *Indian* expedition, by observing, that he seized seven millions of dinars, with a vast quantity of uncoined gold, precious stones, and jewels, in a fortress in *India*, that was situated in the midst of a lake, and was thought to be impregnable. But this perhaps was the sum of five millions sterling, which we have already mentioned; but we shall afterwards attend this mighty *Sultan*, through scenes that have a more immediate relation to the professed subject of this history.

His vast acquisitions.

In the 391st year of the Hejra, died *Abul Fadyel*, the prince of *Aleppo*, who had been left by his father under the tutelage of *Lulu*. That minister according to our authorities, proved at last unfaithful to his trust, and put his master to death. After that, he and his son *Mansur*, usurped that principality, though the late prince had left behind him two sons, who were obliged to fly into *Egypt*, and were never afterwards heard of. *Bahodawla*, continued still to be *Emir Al Omra*, at *Bagdad*; and after the death of *Samsam-dawla*, he had a long war with *Abu Naser*, who it seems had pretensions upon the *Hamdan* estate, in *Irak*. But *Abu Naser*, being assassinated by one of his own slaves, all *Irak* remained in possession of *Bahodawla*, who soon after went to war with *Karwash*, the *Okailite Emir* of *Mawfel*, whom he defeated.

Hei. 391.
A.D. 1000
History of
Aleppo.

Those successes inspired *Bahodawla*, with an insolence which was insufferable even to the califf; for he bestowed upon *Al Sharif*, one of the descendants of the califf *Ali*, the

History of
the califf
Al Kader,
the

and of *Ba-
tiba.*

The califf
of *Bagdad*
named in
the pub-
lic pray-
ers.

the post of nakib, or the chief of *Ali's* descendants and followers, and likewise, that of head iman, and kadi in *Irak*. As it was necessary for the califf *Al Kader*, to sign the commissions for those high officers, he readily signed all, but those that gave him the posts of iman, and kadi; giving for his reasons, that they were of too high importance, to be trusted with a *Shiite*. About this time, *Mohaddelbodawla*, the prince of the upstart principality of *Batiba*, found himself so powerful, that he attempted amongst others, to enlarge his dominions. He was the same who had given refuge to the present califf during his distress, before he was raised to his dignity, and it was perhaps presuming upon that merit, that he ventured about this time, to send *Wasel* his general to attack *Basra*, which in fact still belonged to the califat, or rather to the *Emir Al Omra*. *Wasel*, accordingly made himself master of that city, and likewise of *Siraf*; and acquiring great riches, by the plunder of his new conquests, he declared for himself, and marching with his victorious army to *Batiba*, he obliged his master to take refuge in *Bagdad*, and the califf most ungratefully, as is said, denied him shelter; and expelled him out of *Bagdad*, and the people of *Batiba*, soon after disliking the government of *Wasel*, declared against him, and *Bahodawla* attoned for his master's ingratitude, for he sent his own general *Joyushi*, at the head of an army, who defeated the troops of the usurper, and having taken him prisoner, put him to death. Upon this, *Mohaddelbodawla*, the former prince was reinstated in his government, where he was received by his people with vast demonstrations of affection; but at the same time, he agreed to pay to *Bahodawla*, an annual tribute of fifty thousand dinars.

The dispute between the califfs of *Egypt* and *Bagdad*, concerning the right of being named solely in the public prayers, continued still to be very violent; and *Bahodawla*, vigorously asserted his master's right to that privilege, because, in fact, it was considered, as an evidence of his supremacy, in temporal matters. *Karwash*, the *Okalite Emir of Mawfel*, being, as we have seen, defeated by *Bahodawla*, in resentment, put himself under the protection of *Al Hakem*, the califf of *Egypt*, and consented, that his subjects in his four chief cities, which were *Mawfel*, *Anbar*, *Madayien*, and *Cusa*, should pray for the *Egyptian* califf in a new form. The authority of *Karwash* in this matter, was the greater, as he was at the head of a tribe, greatly respected amongst all the orthodox *Moslems*. But *Bahodawla*, conceived this heresy to be of such importance, that he ordered his general *Boyushi*, once more to advance against him, and to bring him to reason. The troubles of the califf of *Egypt* at that time was such, that he was in no condition to support *Karwash*, who, was obliged to submit to *Bahodawla*,

Bahodawla, and to replace the antient form of prayer. But a point of so great importance was not slightly to be passed over, and the distracted state of the *Egyptian* califf's affairs presented a fair occasion for *Al Kader*, to do himself and the family of *Al Abbas* justice. He convened together all the undoubted descendants of the *Ali* family, and other men of learning and eminence, that he could possibly collect; and obtained from them a writing under their hands, importing, "That the ancestor of *Al Hakem*, was *Disan* the son of *Said*, the author of the *Disanite* sect; and that *Al Hakem*, (whom God plague and curse), was an upstart and a mushroom, and that he is sprung from the scum and the vermin of the earth, without the least relation to the *Ali* family; that may God to all eternity damn, and may all good men curse such villains, and impostors." The subscribers of this verdict, likewise pronounce, that *Al Hakem*, that son of the Earth, is descended from beggars, infidels, villains, seducers, atheists and apostates, who had renounced Islamism, allowed of unlawful marriages, permitted the use of wine, abused the prophets and holy men, and set themselves up for Gods. Such was the subject of this celebrated declaration, which of itself was outrageous and prolix, nor do we know of any answer it ever received from the califf of *Egypt*.

He had appointed a black, one *Abu Mahomet*, to govern *Damascus*, which was still part of his dominions; and this tyrant by way of reply to the above declaration, persecuted with great cruelty, all the *Shiites*, and all who paid the least regard to the memory of the two first califfs. Those and other cruelties, so much alienated the affections of the *Egyptians* from their califf, that one of the lowest of the people, who had been a water drawer, and was therefore called, "the father of the pitcher," turning reformer, and pretending to an uncommon sanctity of life and morals, raised a most formidable rebellion, and possessed himself for some time of all the upper *Egypt*. This rebellion continued for several months; but was at last, with great difficulty suppressed, and vast numbers of the rebels were put to the sword. As to the water drawer, he was taken and put to death in the presence of *Al Hakem*.

The suppression of this rebellion, and the declaration that had been emitted by the califf of *Bagdad*, against *Al Hakem*, made him throw off the mask of Islamism, which he had till then worn, and appear in his natural complexion of impiety and tyranny. Perhaps the enormous cruelties and extravagancies he was guilty of, preserved him so long in the government, over so mean and so superstitious a people as the *Egyptians* are. He persecuted the Christians, and seized for his own use all the rich plate of their churches in *Egypt* and *Syria*, and ordered their places of worship to be demolished. But at the time we now treat of, he gave a liberty

of conscience to all his subjects. His severity against women was very extraordinary; for he ordered, that none of that sex should appear abroad, or even in their balconies, or upon the tops of houses upon pain of death; which a great number of them suffered for not observing his order. At last, to counterballance the disgrace that had been put upon him by *Al Kader*, he was frantic enough to cause himself to be worshipped as a divinity.

Darari's
schism.

With this intent he encouraged one *Darari*, an enthusiast, fit for his purpose, to assume the character of a prophet, and to teach the people that *Al Hakem*, their califf, was God Almighty, the creator of the world, and that it was their duty to worship him. This doctrine, extravagant and impious as it was, met with many believers, either through enthusiasm or interest, and *Al Hakem* took his prophet into such particular favour, that he daily appeared abroad with him. At last, his impieties provoked a *Turk* to assassinate *Darari*, as he sat by *Al Hakem's* side in his chariot, for which the *Turk* was put to death. This happened at *Cairo*, and was attended with vast commotions, in which *Darari's* house, and those of many of his followers were rifled, and themselves murdered.

Al Hakem
a follower
of *Al Ka-*
di.

Another impostor soon after started up in the person of one *Al Hadi*, whose doctrine tended to extirpate not only Islamism, but morality, and all kind of religion out of the world. He abolished all manner of ceremonies, fastings, prayers, alms and pilgrimages to *Mecca*, and permitted marriages within the prohibited degrees. The degeneracy of manners that now prevailed amongst the *Egyptians* soon procured a great many followers to this indulgent doctrine; for the prohibition of drinking wine and strong liquors, was likewise taken off by it; and *Al Hakem* professed himself one of *Al Hadi's* followers. In short, the votaries of this new religion, encreased so fast, that *Al Hadi* had missionaries and disciples, all over *Egypt* and *Syria*, and all the outward ceremonies of Islamism, even to the annual present of a piece of silk to the caaba, was discontinued; and instead of *Mecca*, the califf performed a procession to *Thalabya*. In short, so universal a profligacy of manners, and disregard for Islamism, took place, that its true professors thought the downfall of their religion was at hand. The califf found so great an increase of the *Dararians*, who professed to worship him as a God, that he proceeded from one act of frenzy to another, and was guilty of the most shocking barbarities, especially against the inhabitants of *Meser*, who had recourse to their usual method of lampoons and complaints, by exhibiting them in the hands of a female figure dressed out for that purpose upon the high road, by which they knew the califf was to pass. Upon reading one of those representations, which was more than commonly sarcastic, he fell into such a fury, that he ordered the in-

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habitants

habitants of *Mefer* to be massacred, and their city to be set on fire. The citizens defended themselves bravely from the swords; but they could not save their houses from the flames of his soldiers. Their noble resistance made the califf repent of his inhumanity, and he denied his having given orders for it. Upon this, the inhabitants besought him to suffer them, either to leave the city with their families, or to drive out the authors of their calamities; and finding that almost a fourth part of their city was consumed, they were preparing to leave it in a body. Upon this, *Al Hakem* revoked the private orders he had given, and a stop was put both to the conflagration, and the massacres; but not before the most dreadful enormities had been committed, by the *Dararians*, by plundering equally the houses of Christians, Jews, and Moslems, and ravishing or making prisoners of the women who fell into their hands, many of whom put themselves to death, that they might be freed from their insolence. It was remarked, that the *Dararians*, who were the principal actors in this barbarous scene, every time *Al Hakem* appeared abroad on his ass, saluted him as their God, the author of life and death.

Such execrable frantic inhumanities, could have been born by no people; but the *Egyptians* who have been always formed for slavery, and noted for being most obsequious, to their greatest tyrants. But *Egypt* had lately received many new inhabitants, from *Syria*, *Arabia*, and chiefly from *Africa*; so that there happened to be spirit enough amongst them, to rid the world of this monster. His own sister *Settalmolca* headed the conspiracy from personal motives. *Al Hakem* had treated her in an injurious, contumelious manner, and she applied to one *Dawas*, who seems to have been an *Arab*, to have him assassinated. *Dawas* undertook this upon condition, that when the tyrant was dead, he should be made first minister of state, and that each of the two assassins whom he meant to employ, should receive from *Settalmolca* a thousand dinars. All those demands were complied with, and *Dawas* performed his bargain, by assassinating the califf in the thirty-seventh year of his age, and the twenty-sixth of his reign. *Settalmolca*, for reasons of state, kept his death private for some time, and buried her brother's body, in her own house. But *Al Hakem*, not appearing abroad as usual, the people began to be very uneasy, and *Settalmolca*, producing *Abul Kasem* his son, who was but fifteen years of age; published *Al Hakem's* death, and procured the young prince to be recognized as califf. But the people still continuing to be in a ferment, and many of them calling out for vengeance, upon the califf's murderers, she, with amazing intrepidity, brought them all three before the public, and there with her own hands, put them to death. After this, she found no difficulty of assuming the reins of government into her own hands,

hands, and she governed *Egypt* and *Syria*, to the time of her death, which happened about four years after her brother's murder.

History of Jorjan. About this time, a very extraordinary revolution happened in *Jorjan*, where *Washmakin*, who the reader may remember, reascended that throne upon the death of *Fakrowdawla*, continued to reign. But he was a prince of greater austerity, than the times could bear. He endeavoured, by severity and discipline, to reform his court and army, and this produced against him a conspiracy in both; which ended in his deposition, and he was sent prisoner to *Bastan*. The conspirators however, applied to his son *Manujubar*, and told him, that they were ready to recognize him for their sovereign, if he would approve of his father's deposition, but that if he would not, they would chuse another. The young prince seemed to comply, only that he might have an opportunity of throwing himself at his father's feet, and imploring his permission to replace him upon his throne; and to inflict signal punishments upon the conspirators. *Washmakin* approved of his son's filial piety, but declared, that he was resolved never again, to expose himself to the troubles of the world. We are told, that this interview coming to the knowledge of the conspirators, they went to *Gefaserk*, where *Washmakin* was confined, and plundering his apartment, and his bed of all his cloaths, and striking even his person, he perished with cold; by which we may conclude, that it was not in his son's power to relieve him. According to the *Moslem* historians, this *Washmakin* was one of the most understanding, as well as the most virtuous princes of his age. He was accomplished with all the learning of that country and times, and was the friend, and patron of the famous *Avicena*, who to this day many consider as a second *Hypocrates* in physic. The true name of this great physician was *Ebu Sina*, from whence came the corruption *Avicena*.

Revolutions in the califfat. During all those revolutions *Bahodawla*, continued still to act as *Emir Al Omra*. His private affairs during the latter part of his life, obliged him to be often absent, from *Bagdad*, and to reside in his patrimonial territories, in *Persia*, where he died of an apoplexy, the disease which had been fatal to his father. He was succeeded in his post as *Emir Al Omra*, by his son *Abu Shaja*, who was confirmed in his high dignity, by the califf *Al Kader*. This prince made *Shiras*, his residence, when he was in *Persia*. Many other revolutions happened in the califat at that time, which can with no propriety enter into a general history; and indeed are immaterial to any. We cannot however help remarking, that the same thing happened in the eastern countries at this time, as happened afterwards in *Italy* upon the revival of learning. For tho' very state was convulsed with conspiracies and rebellions, and tho' the dominions of all the reigning

reigning princes, were filled with blood-shed and wars, either foreign or domestic, yet never had literature of all kinds, more noble patrons, and a more generous protectors. Its professors, seem to be sacred from the calamities of the times, and princes did not vie amongst themselves more for the enlargement of power, than for the encouragement of learning, for every page of the *Moslem* history, is full of the vast honours, paid to men of genius, both in their life time, and after their death.

The new *Emir Al Omra* had been dignified with the appellation of *Sultanodawla*; and he began his reign over *Irak* History of
with disposing and putting to death *Taber*, his fathers fa- *Sultana-*
vourite and first minister, who had amassed an estate of *dawla.*
1,000,000 of dinars, and built, a noble palace, which he furnished in the most elegant manner; all which upon his death, was seized upon by *Sultanodawla*. That prince had two brothers, and he appointed *Abu Thaer* one of them to be governor of *Shiraz*, and *Fawares*, another, to be governor of *Kerman*. *Fawares* however, soon rebelled and made himself master of *Shiraz*. Being driven from thence by *Sultanodawla*, he retired into his own government of *Kerwan*; but was obliged at last to throw himself under the protection of the great *Sultan Mahmud*; who readily gave him refuge, and appointed *Tabi*, one of his generals to assist him with an army. *Tabi* accordingly understanding that *Sultanodawla*, was at *Bagdad* made an irruption into *Kerwan*, and even took the city of *Shiraz*. It was plain from the conduct of *Tabi*, that his intention was only to enlarge his masters power, and upon *Sultanodawla* marching from *Bagdad* at the head of an army, *Fawares* fled first to *Hamadan*, and after that to *Al Fakey*, where he was hospitably received, by the reigning princes. The conduct of *Mahmud's* general soon convinced *Sultanodawla*, as well as *Fawares*, of his interested views, and *Jalalodawla* the third brother, becoming an advocate for a reconciliation, *Fawares* was restored to his government of *Kerwan*.

In the 408th year of the *Hejra*, a swarm of barbarians, consisting of oriental *Turks* and *Tartars*, upon the borders of *China*, made an irruption into *Turkistan*; which was then governed by *Dogan* the son of *Ilek*. Their numbers would be incredible, did we not reflect upon the numbers of barbarians, that often poured from the northern countries, into the *Roman*, and the *Greek* empires. But the barbarians, we are now treating of did not make this irruption so much thro' necessity as ambition. They came from countries that abounded both with the necessaries and luxuries of life; and they brought along with them great quantities of gold, and silver plate, and what was reckoned still more valuable porcelane vases, and dishes, a manufacture that was then, in high perfection in *China*, and but little known, even to the *Moslems* themselves. Their numbers were so immense, that

The *Turks*
and *Tar-*
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califat.

that when they encamped, they pitched three hundred thousand tents. They proceeded towards *Balasgum*, then the capital of *Turkistan*, but being within eight days journey of that city, hearing of the vast preparations, made against them by *Dogan*, they stopt to deliberate, whether they should advance or not. A retreat was resolved upon, which *Dogan* did all he could to cut off. We are told, that he pursued them for three months, and at last surprizing them, when they thought they were out of his reach, he slew two hundred thousand of them; and returned to *Turkistan*, with a vast booty in gold, silver, and porcelane.

Succes-
ses of *Mosh-
refodaw-
la*.

Fawares, who had been reinstated in the government of *Kerwan*, or the *Arabian Irak*, was now honoured with the name of *Moshrefodawla*, and continued still to be uneasy with his brother; notwithstanding the late treaty between them, by which *Sultanodawla* was acknowledged to be the sovereign of *Alwas* and *Fars*. *Sultanodawla* therefore, ordered one of his generals, *Saleh*, to march against him with a strong army, and to dispossess him of his government. Historians have generally blamed, *Sultanodawla*, for this proceeding, and indeed from the complexion of the history, it does not appear, which of the two was the eldest brother. In the last treaty that was made between them, it had been inserted as an article, that neither of the brothers, should employ one *Sabelan*, who had sown dissention between them, as a minister, and that *Moshrefodawla*, should confine himself to his government of the *Arabian Irak*, without taking the smallest concern in the affairs of *Persia*. It appears as if *Moshrefodawla* had been pretty punctual in his observing this treaty but that *Sultanodawla* violated it by making *Sabelan* his first minister. This provoked *Moshrefodawla* to take up arms, and being joined by the *Irakian Arabs* his army tho' far from being so numerous, was incomparably better disciplined than that of *Sultanodawla* under *Saleh*, who was defeated with great slaughter in a pitched battle, and obliged to take shelter in a fortress. Here he was besieged by *Moshrefodawla*, and forced to surrender himself and his garrison prisoners to the conqueror. Next year *Moshrefodawla* ordered the eyes of *Saleh* to be put out and an alliance was struck up between him and his brother *Jalalodawla*. Flushed with his successes *Moshrefodawla* assumed to himself the title of King of Kings, which makes it somewhat probable that he was the eldest son. And indeed it may be proper to remark, once for all in this place, that seniority is not easily determined amongst a people who like those we now treat of admitted of a plurality of wives and concubines, while it was in the breast of the father to give the preference to any son he pleased. Several sons born at the same time, perhaps upon the same day in the same separate apartments and houses makes it difficult for even the father to pronounce with certainty which is eldest. Hence it is that the history of the califfs and the princes

princes of the east are crowded with wars amongst brethren.

While *Moshreffodawla* continued thus victorious in the *Arabian Irak*, *Sultanodawla* died at *Schiraz* after acting for about twelve years as *Emir Al Omra*. He was succeeded in that quality by his son *Ganjar*, who was conducted to *Shiraz*, where his father died, by a party of his troops, who were then in the field, and commanded by *Abu Mokaram*. But before he got to that city, it was taken possession of by his uncle *Moshreffodawla*, for whom, the *Turks*, and the army there declared; he had even the interest to procure *Abu Mokaram* to be arrested. But *Abul Hasem*, *Abu Mokaram's* son, and *Ganjar*, advancing to *Shiraz* at the head of a powerful army, *Moshreffodawla*, thought proper to leave *Shiraz*, which was immediately taken possession of by *Ganjar*, who declared himself sovereign of *Kerman*, and *Fars*. Soon after however, a compromise was made between *Ganjar* and *Moshreffodawla*, by which the latter was restored to the provinces of *Kerman* and *Fars*, and the former obtained *Abwaz*. *Ganjar* soon repented this agreement, and his friends, persuaded him to raise another army, with which he once more dispossessed his uncle, of *Shiraz*, but next year *Moshreffodawla* died having acted for five years as *Emir Al Omra*. The relations of authors at this period, being contradictory and jarring we have followed that, which is most probable, and most universally admitted.

He is succeeded by *Ganjar*.

Moshreffodawla, in quality of *Emir Al Omra*, was succeeded by his brother *Jalalodawla*, but he being at *Basra*, the califf was persuaded, tho' *Jalalodawla*, was pitched upon by all the principal people of his court to succeed as *Emir Al Omra*, to nominate another. This produced a civil war. *Jalalodawla* raised an army, and marched towards *Bagdad*, and notwithstanding all the efforts of the califf *Al Kader*, to keep matters easy, a bloody battle was fought in the neighbourhood of *Bagdad*, in which *Jalalodawla* was entirely defeated and obliged to fly to *Basra*. About the same time a revolution happened at *Edessa*; where *Atira*, one of the *Nomeirite Arabs*, was dispossessed of his sovereignty, by *Nasiredawla*, the prince of *Diyar Beker*, who cut off *Atira's* head.

And he is succeeded by *Jalalodawla*.

All the kingdoms in the east at this time were so much involved in confusion and blood shed, that their history is scarcely worth being transmitted. The perpetual influxes of *Turks* and other barbarians, void of letters or literature, sufficient even to transmit the very ravages they committed, over-run the face of those noble countries. The most powerful princes, were no other than fortunate usurpers, and held their dominions by no other tenure than that of the sword. The califf of *Bagdad*, notwithstanding the vast reduction of his power, sometimes found means, by ballancing parties, to make himself considerable. He was still the idol of

conquests of the *Turks*.

they take
Bagdad.

of authority, and even his tyrants, the *Emirs Al Omra*, were obliged to kiss his foot; tho' they had not the smallest respect for his person. *Mirkhond*, the *Persian* historian informs us that about the time we now treat of, an army of *Turks*, and other barbarians, besieged and took *Bagdad* itself, and after setting it on fire, plundering it, and reducing the inhabitants to the utmost distress and poverty, they choose *Jalalodawla*, for their leader. He accordingly set out for *Basra*, and upon his arrival at *Bagdad*, he had the honour of kissing the foot of his slave, the califf; who received him with marks of the most cordial respect, and nominated him *Emir Al Omra*: in which high station, he secured himself till the day of his death. But the power of *Emir Al Omra*, like that of califf, was now little better than nominal. The *Turks*, after firing, and impoverishing *Bagdad*, domineered in it; and at last, they mutinied for their pay. It was in vain for *Jalalodawla* to interpose his authority, for they took and confined him, till the califf himself, was obliged to satisfy their demands; by selling the furniture and the moveables of his palace. The house of *Buya*, was now in great jeopardy of being stript, of all those rich possessions they had acquired. *Sultan Mahmud*, the conqueror of *India*, perceiving their divisions, sought to avail himself of them, and ordered, an army, to invade *Al Ray*, which was then in possession of *Ganjar*. *Ganjar* being informed of *Mahmud's* intentions proposed an alliance, offensive and defensive, amongst all the princes of the house of *Buya*. But *Mahmud*, for that time laying aside his preparations, *Jalalodawla* invaded *Ahwaz*, and plundered *Ganjar's* treasury there. This served for sometime to satisfy the cravings of the *Turks*, who domineered over the *Deylamite* foldiers, and were patronized by *Malec*, *Jalalodawla's* grandson. *Ganjar* made his advantage of this, and marching into *Ahwaz*, he took *Basra*, and after that to *Waset*, with all *Jalalodawla's* effects, and money. *Jalalodawla* was at this time at the head of a great army at *Bagdad*, but he found himself unable to move. His *Turkish* troops refused to march without their pay; and when he attempted to raise it upon the chief inhabitants of *Bagdad*, he drew upon himself the hatred of that city.

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pay.

We now come to the exploits of a lady, one of the most extraordinary of that or any other age. She has been already mentioned under the name of *Seyd*; she was the widow of *Fakradawla*, who left her guardian to his son *Rostan*, the prince of the *Persian Irak*. Having an uncommon genius for government, while her son was under her tuition, he was prosperous, powerful and happy. But *Rostan* being weak enough, when he came of age, to disdain the tutelage of his mother, he chose *Avicena* for his first minister. His mother, not brooking her being thus deprived of her power, fled to *Larissen*, a principality situated upon the eastern

History of
the prin-
ce's *Seyd*.

eastern part of the *Persian Gulf*, where *Padarin* the sovereign of the province, furnished her with a body of troops. She immediately advanced into the *Persian Irak*, and a general battle ensued, between her and her son, in which the latter was defeated, and taken prisoner. After this success, she behaved with incomparable magnanimity. She restored her son to his throne, but kept the reins of government in her own hand. Her administration was mild, wise, and prudent. She was remarkable for the decorum of her behaviour. When she gave audience to her own subjects, for she appears to have left her son very little more than the name of king, she did it behind a screen of gauze, or other transparent stuff. But when she gave audience to foreigners, that screen was removed. After a glorious reign, she left her son a rich and a powerful prince; but her death encouraged *Sultan Mahmud*, to invade the *Persian Irak*; which he did with a prodigious army. *Rostan*, or as he is called by the *Persian* historians, *Majdodawla*, notwithstanding the vast spirit, and abilities of his mother, was a weak and a pusillanimous prince. Instead of opposing *Mahmud* in the field, he was so intimidated, with the name of that great conqueror, that he put himself into his hands, which was all that *Mahmud* wished for. He no sooner was in possession of *Rostan's* person, than he seized the city of *Al Ray*, where he found in *Rostan's* treasury, about a million sterling in money and effects; and he likewise seized upon all his family. The unhappy prince could do no more than bewail his condition, and to urge the confidence he had reposed in his conqueror, as an argument for his being restored to his dominions. *Mahmud*, upon this, ordered *Rostan* to be introduced into his presence, and in a haughty manner, he demanded of him, amongst other things, whether he had read the history of the kings of *Persia*, or understood the game of chess? Being answered in the affirmative as to both questions, *Mahmud* again asked him, whether he could find any example either in the history, or in the game, that did not tend to prove, that two contending kings, always endeavoured to destroy one another; and then he asked him, why he was so imprudent as to put himself into his (*Mahmud's*) power. After this remarkable conversation, *Mahmud* ordered *Rostan* to be sent prisoner under a guard to *Gazna*; where he soon after died. His death rendered *Mahmud* the uncontrouled master of *Ispahan*, *Kazwin*, and *Al Ray*, so that the dominions of the house of *Buya*, over all those noble countries, entirely ceased. *Mahmud* gave his new acquired principality to his son *Mahsud*, who established his residence at *Al Ray*. But the natural inconstancy of the eastern people, joined perhaps to *Mahmud's* severity, soon made them endeavour to shake off his yoke. This produced fresh scenes of bloodshed, for we are told, that no fewer than four thousand of the chief inhabitants.

Vast success of *Sultan Mahmud*.

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cter.

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his will.

habitants of *Ispahan* were put to death upon that occasion, as were great numbers of those of *Kazwin*; before *Mahmud* returned to *Gazna*. He was called thither by an invasion of his dominions; by the *Gazan Turks*, who had over-run all *Korasan*; out of which they were now driven by *Mahmud*. Those *Turks* were headed by *Arslan*, the son of *Seljuk*, the founder of the famous dynasty of that name. They now began to make a great figure in the East, of which they threatened an entire conquest. Besides, *Arslan*, they had for leaders, *Togrol*, *Bek*, *Dowd*, and *Bigu*, all of them brothers, and of the *Seljuk* family. All that *Mahmud* could do, was far from extirpating them. About ten thousand of them retired to *Ispahan*, another body took possession of *Marawanar*, others of them ravaged *Adherbijan*, and at last, they even made themselves masters of *Al Ray*, and *Hamadan*, and almost of *Marwsef*; all of them capital cities. This irruption was followed by a revolution, in *Aleppo*, where *Abu Camel* seized the government. It was about this time, that the great *Sultan Mahmud Gazna* died. He was about sixty one years of age at the time of his death. He was called *Gazna*, from that city being the place of his residence, of his birth, and of his death. The history of this great man is little known, though he was one of the most illustrious conquerors, of that or any other age. His father, *Sabektekkin*, was no other than a general, under the *Nuh* Family, and his mother, was daughter to the prince *Zablesten*. He seems to have been one of those heroes, who cultivated justice, through all parts of his character, excepting what related to ambition; and in that, he was as great a monster as any we have upon record. He was remarkable for the ugliness of his face, and the eastern historians have transmitted to us, several of his moral sayings on that subject; but without any thing uncommon in them. We have already touched upon his character in several respects; but it must not be forgotten, that his minister *Meimendi*, was a great patron of learned men; and particularly of the famous poet of *Persia*, *Ferdusi*, who wrote the annals of that kingdom, in verse. The riches which *Sultan Mahmud* left behind him were incredible; and before his death he had the weakness to order them all to be displayed before his face, nor could he refrain weeping at the sight, perhaps from the consciousness of his having so unjustly acquired them. The cause of his death is said to have been an ulcer in his lungs. He left behind him two sons, *Mamud* and *Masud*; who were declared enemies to one another. This gave *Mamud* a sensible concern. He appointed his younger son *Masud*, to be king of the *Persian Irak*; and the rest of his extensive dominions, he gave to *Mamud*. Before his death, he made them both take an ineffectual oath, not to disturb each other in the possession of what he left them; and that they should equally divide between them, his vast treasures. His eyes, however,

however, were scarcely closed, when, as we shall soon relate, *Masud* dethroned his elder brother, and put out his eyes. One part of *Mahmud's* history, is a little dark, for we are told, that before his death, he besieged *Bagdad*, and obliged the califf *Al Kader*, to give him a large sum of money. But the truth is, there was such a variety of revolutions, and adventures at this time, that it is impossible to speak with precision to one half of the great events, that happened within it.

In the 422d year of the Hejra, *Al Kader*, the califf of *Bagdad* died; after a reign of about forty years, and in the eighty seventh year of his age. This vast age gave a veneration to his person, which made the latter part of his life comfortable to him. He is said to have been extremely pious, charitable, and affable; so that even the *Turkish* soldiers, brutal and barbarous as they were, treated him with infinite respect. During his life he recovered in a great measure, the respect that was due to him as califf, by being named first along with the *Fatemite* califf of *Egypt*, in the public prayers, and soon after alone. Under him the state of the Christian church, in the East, was truly deplorable. The bishops of *Egypt*, were a scandal to their profession. The patriarch of *Alexandria* indeed, whose name was *Zakarias*, was a worthy man; but his suffragans and inferior clergy, were so vile, ignorant, and infamous in their manners, that they brought on a persecution upon Christianity itself, which lasted for nine years. During this time, it is said, that *Zakarias*, together with another Christian, were, by the order of *Al Hakem*, the *Fatemite* califf of *Egypt*, thrown into a den of lions; but that both of them escaped unhurt, a circumstance which, though it is represented to be miraculous, is by no means incredible. His successor in the see of *Alexandria*, is represented, to have been, a monster of avarice, and guilty of symonaical practices. Before we close the history of this califat, we are to take notice of a very singular circumstance, which shews the vast esteem in which poets were held in the eastern countries. *Fardusi*, the poet we have already mentioned, was greatly caressed by the *Sultan Mahmud*, and had honours and riches heaped upon him. But taking disgust upon a certain occasion, he left the court of *Gazna*, for that of *Bagdad*. *Mahmud*, in resentment, threatened a declaration of war, unless his poet was restored to him. But the califf of *Bagdad*, happening to be as fond of poetry as *Mahmud* was, refused to part with *Fardusi*. This produced a very warm letter, in which *Mahmud* threatened to invade the califat of *Bagdad*. The match undoubtedly would be unequal, as *Mahmud* was then the most powerful prince in the world, and above all things valued himself, upon the number of elephants he had in his army. But all the terrors of his name and power, could not frighten the califf of *Bagdad*, poor, and helpless,

Hej. 422

A. D.

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Death and

character

of the ca-

liff.

as he was, into a compliance with his demand, of resigning the poet. He sent him a short answer, from the *Alkoran*, which was, "Hast thou not seen how my lord dealt with the masters of the elephant?" Thereby intimating, that God Almighty would be upon his side, and render him victorious, should he be attacked, notwithstanding all *Mahmud's* elephants.

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End of the SIXTH VOLUME.